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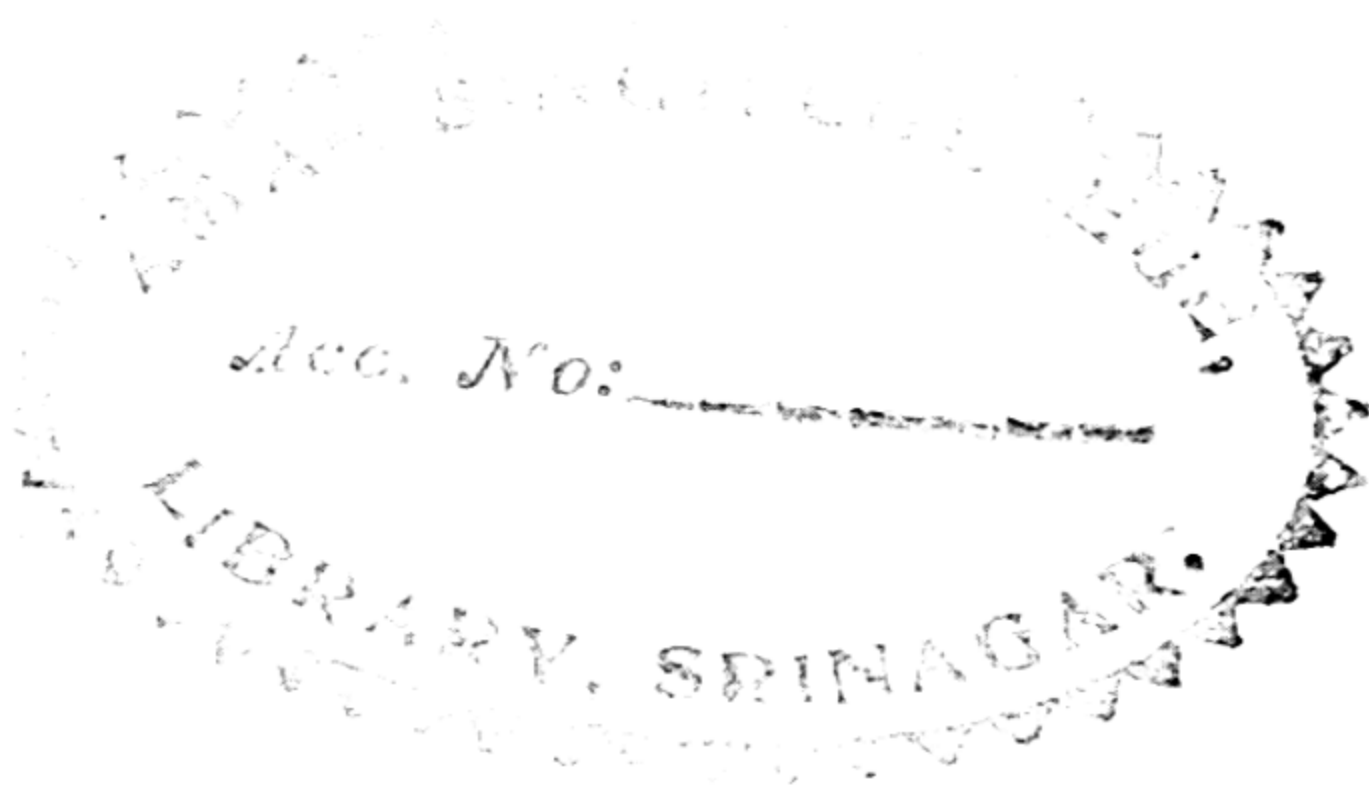
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**NOTES ON THE ORIGINALITY
OF THOUGHT**

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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**NOTES ON THE
ORIGINALITY OF THOUGHT**

**The Concept of Internal
Necessity: Poetic Thought
and Constructive Thought**

BY LEONE VIVANTE

TRANSLATED BY PROFESSOR

BRODRICK-BULLOCK

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Note 47, p. 44, has already been printed in *The New Criterion* for June 1926, and thanks are due to the Editor of this Review for his kind permission to reprint it here.

PART I

THE CONCEPT OF INTERNAL NECESSITY

[illegible]

PART I

THE CONCEPT OF INTERNAL NECESSITY

1

IN criticism, and in every contemplative investigation of art and life, the concept of an *internal necessity*—which is neither *determinism* nor yet *arbitrium*—is a concept from which it is impossible to escape, and the absence of which, in face of nearly every problem, renders thought inadequate.

2

The concept of *necessity* is generally understood to imply that of *relativity*: the term “necessary” is applied to that fact which is conceived of as *the consequence of some other thing*. But I attach quite another meaning to it. By “necessary” I mean that which is intimately necessary, necessary in itself; and the concept of internal necessity is entirely different and opposed to the above definition, through which *necessity* implies a reference to some other thing. By this concept I mean to connote that *the cause is intimate*. And the study of the concept of internal necessity is nothing but the study of this intimate character, nothing but an investigation and a clearing up of the problem which this intimate character presents.

It is not strictly correct to say that the expression

is the *consequence* of the concept which it sets forth. In the facts of consciousness, actuation or expression is essential to the existence of a concept or of a sentiment¹ : for this reason the former cannot be properly said to be the consequence of the latter. Indeed the cause to which in a given case reference is made is not even here exhausted in that particular case. Nevertheless it is not an external cause, it is not an order of facts or of laws existing outside that particular case ; it is not the whole as a fact, and as a fact which conditions absolutely that given case : on the contrary, the cause has no existence except in so far as it is operative in the given case, except in so far as it is realised and *is* in it.—The problem of this intimacy, through which *the expression* (the realisation), *the value*, and *the intimate non-arbitrariness* (the intrinsicality, the eternity) of *the value*, are *one*—this is evidently a fundamental problem of mental activity.

For instance, if I say : “ An honest man is incapable of deceiving in that way,” the cause to which I refer (especially the character or the essential nature of good faith) does not, properly speaking, condition, but rather constitutes, the given act to which I allude. The nature or character of good faith is not some other thing as compared with the act *in which we recognise good faith itself, and in which the latter has reality*. The particular case is a *deduction*, because it is the actuation, individuation, exemplification of a principle. But this principle is so internal

¹ By expression I mean any mental presentment, however rudimentary, and I do not necessarily imply any external expression.

to the act, so entirely one with it, that it is impossible to say that the act is a necessary *consequence* of it. It is only by adopting a one-sided terminology and a one-sided concept that we could describe the act as a consequence of the principle ; that would be the case, if we were to consider from a unilateral point of view not the principle in its spiritual reality, but its physiological conditions, and its conditions in general, its past, in so far as the latter has taken shape perhaps in the course of thousands of years and formed the character of an individual. There is also another way of representing the same relation as a relation of condition or of external necessity, and here also we should be standing aloof from the reality. This would be the case if, while keeping outside the act, outside its logic, we were to translate according to formal logic the reality into its existing, co-existing elements, in themselves inactive, and thereby lose their living nexus ; as if we were to say : Honesty and bad faith do not coexist (or rarely so) in one and the same subject ; this man is honest, therefore he has not cheated (or it is not probable that he has done so).

3

This is the extent to which an internal necessity inherent in *spontaneity* fails to be recognised.

So Brunschvicg writes : “ Or s’il y a une évidence dont il soit permis de parler en ce monde, n’est-ce pas l’impossibilité que de l’individuel et du libre sortent l’universel et le nécessaire ? ” ¹

¹ Léon Brunschvicg, *L’expérience humaine et la causalité physique*, Paris, 1922, p. 36.

Another author, while he recognises in the most explicit manner as an attribute of activity a spontaneity, or several spontaneities, or absolute beginnings, nevertheless lays it down that these spontaneities are *extra legem*, "a-logical," capricious, arbitrary.

But if we wish to deny a logical character to individuality, this is only because our conceptions both of logic and of individuality require to be corrected. The more intimate consciousness we gain of conscious activity and of the subtle essence of the 'universals' of logic, the more clearly we must recognise the error which lies in the above conclusions or formulae, and in confirmation of my point of view it is hoped that these notes may furnish fresh evidence.

Consciousness is always *consciousness, universality, individuation, a principle of inclusion, of exclusion, an intuitive value*, and so on ; its content is not arbitrary. In so far as it is, it cannot but be consciousness, it cannot but be love, or deceit, universality, liberty, or the values which are contrary to these and yet intelligible with them—where always we recognise the same principles, a kinship *ex principio* : it cannot escape from itself, that is, from the nature of mind. It is also true that the extension, the intensity, the height of the synthesis, or spontaneity, varies ; but likewise this variation is not arbitrary or fortuitous : inasmuch as the demand to accept the reality beyond every limit, to assume another element in synthesis, *is a vocation*. Effort is a vocation. It certainly is not *given*—and this is the first point ; but neither is it without root in an internal necessity ; because

in fact that effort is the universal *par excellence*,¹ and the universality which characterises it is all the more apparent, because while always different and new, it is yet always identical with itself, inasmuch as it is intelligible, recognisable, through a fundamental identity.

4

There can be no greater mistake than that of positing thought in its spontaneity, that is, in so far as it is spontaneous, *as a-logical*. Thought has no reality, it has no existence of any kind, except in its spontaneity. And certainly in this its spontaneity its realisation (its being) is *in question*; but its being *in question* is exactly that which realises its most profound law.

The error arises from clinging to a concept of external, formal law, which governs from outside a content which it does not constitute; from the difficulty of avoiding the law being objectivated and turned into almost a material thing, a material or schematically ideal reality, a term of abstract perfection, an idol, no longer a principle; and especially from the failure to understand *a value intimately final, which is a value because at the same time it is a principle (or law)*.

5

The spiritual principle, the very principle of synthesis, is diffused in all sensibility, and constitutes it. It is not—as far as we know—a principle

¹ See my work, *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 46, 77, and chap. v.

of a different order, which must be "presupposed" or "postulated," distinct from sensibility, and "rendering" sensibility "possible."

6

To consider things under the aspect of eternity means to consider them in their original and eternal¹ nature, and I would remind the reader that every moment of thought (not only *some*) is wholly (not only *partly*) essential, original, eternal. Therefore, when I speak of 'essential values,' I do not intend to distinguish these from other non-essential values, but rather to refer to them *qua essential*. For instance, a good action, if it is considered with reference to its efficacy at a given moment, with reference to its consequences and its conditions, may not perhaps appear to us in its aspect of eternity, that is, as an original value, infinitely original, possessing an intrinsic necessity or character. This aspect of eternity, that is, this value as intrinsic, original, is known, if this good act or moment be considered in itself, in its immediate, not in its *instrumental* reality.

7

The aspect of things which chiefly attracts our attention is generally furnished by transitory interests and relations, and that which is original, and

¹ I do not use the term "eternal" either as denoting "everlasting" or "timeless," but much in the same sense as "intrinsic," "essential to activity." Only the former term is sometimes preferable, in my opinion, because it better expresses the value inherent in the same conception. See *Intelligence in Expression*, § 69.

intimately final, the spiritual reality, escapes us. For this reason we do not recognise that every content of consciousness is formed of eternal values, that it is original, in itself necessary, eternal, intrinsic to activity, *true*. For instance, the transitory conditions which are necessary for the actuation of our intuition of light interest us more than our activity which is realising itself in these conditions. Thus, for instance, when a beacon is lighted, what happens is a thing which, in that place and that moment, strictly speaking, will not recur, and which is transitory. Nevertheless, at that very moment, the exercising of our thought, a becoming conscious, which is light—which belongs to the new-born and to man of every age and clime ; consciousness as light, or intuitive value, as a value of light, as a value not arbitrary, which we can neither construct nor substitute, a value which brings us into a sense of necessity or objectivity, which is in fact this sense ; that is, in one word, the *light*, in so far as it is thought (consciousness, sensibility); this is a principle essential, universal, eternal ; it is a reality of thought ; it is an aspect of the originality of the act, indeed the originality itself. But this originality is overlooked. The beacon, not this reality of thought, is observed. Therefore our impression is only regarded as contingent, or as caused by a system of external causes, and as ephemeral and almost irrelevant (from a philosophical point of view) ; and it is considered obvious that in order to study it (its origin or formation, its conditions, its ‘ history ’) reference must be made to what is called a “ psychological ” or “ psychogenetic ” study ; as if it were possible for

a single moment to set aside its originality, the fact that in itself this moment of consciousness, as a reality of consciousness or thought, is profoundly *true*, that is, obeys an internal, and 'eternal,' law of its own.

8

A principle-value has no less a value of universality than the formal categories. Let us consider, for instance, a thought of humility, a thought of pride. In so far as they *are*, they answer to an intrinsic nature of their own, infinitely necessary, infinitely original, infinitely recognisable.

9

When, for instance, a thought of love follows a thought of pride ; or utility and passion are at variance ; or certainty is supplanted by doubt ; or a sudden vision excludes every other care ; or the soul in a thought of charity finds peace : *wherever there is an intelligible development*, it cannot be said that *there are no logical nexus*—this may be said if there be a reference to associations apparently fortuitous, which should be entirely attributed (as it would seem) to physiological conditions, to blind mechanical causes. And to say that there are only psychological *nexus* has no meaning.

It is impossible to exclude the logical nature of the *psyche*, which is not a spiritual 'amalgam,' but wholly a kinship *ex principio*, whose study is essentially and manifestly philosophical. It is not indeed the function of logic to study only a world of abstract relations, only the forms of a thought which

tends to represent things *more geometrico*; but rather a living kinship, which is yet full of necessity.

10

It is maintained that the content of a fact of consciousness cannot be derived logically (see, e.g., W. Windelband, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1914, p. 239). It should be observed that this concept is erroneous, or expressed ambiguously: inasmuch as *the content is not given by the conditions or by the stimuli*, but by an intrinsicity of values and forms. There is no reason why the genesis or the "psycho-genesis" of a thought's content should be exclusively or preferably referred to 'second,' rather than to 'first' causes.

A given content of consciousness is derived logically in so far as it is *explained*, and it is explained by recognising in it values, and relations of condition, through which we identify ourselves with it, and, by remaking it, we understand the spiritual necessity of its formation or birth, and we discover, more or less intentionally and explicitly, the eternity or internal necessity of these values and relations. This is true, also, because these values and relations really constitute the content, and do not regard the form alone (as distinct from the content). *Individuation* and *universality* (intrinsicity)—at any rate in the case of a consciousness that is alive to these values, to these principles, in rich and specified forms—explain *logically* moments of pride, of exclusiveness, of comprehension, of charity, of good faith, of treachery, of joy, of anguish, of light, of

darkness : they explain the content of a moment of consciousness, because they make it intelligible according to intrinsic, eternal necessities of mind. Or, at least, the contrary cannot be asserted, as an ascertained fact, not deserving examination ; unless we wish to reduce logic to those *schemata* which rest on "conventional" identities and on relations of condition. But nothing can be more absurd than this, provided we are unwilling to lose the meaning of the *logos*.

The truth is that when we deny that the determination of a content of consciousness may be explained logically, this happens because its conditions, and its internal reason or essence, are confounded in that content ; and also the conditions are improperly regarded as *determining* the content, the originality of which and its non-arbitrary nature are on the other hand unknown or not adequately recognised ; the conditions, the occasion, the stimulus are regarded as the principle determining in its very quality or meaning the content, which in reality is not *constituted* by them. The originality of thought, which is full of necessity or intrinsic character, is either overlooked or at least not clearly recognised *as content*. Synthesis, for instance, is conceived of as a condition, not as a reality of thought, not as an identity of principle, to which its being a *value*, a reality of consciousness, an intuitive content, is essential.

Now the originality of thought, in its values and forms which are never arbitrary (*arbitrium* can never create any reality of consciousness), that is, the real content of a thought, is intelligible, is made

transparent in the principle-values of activity, is *true*, in so far as it conforms to an internal nature or essence. Everything in nature is original and true ! (by *everything* I mean all that has life, that is, an inner or spiritual nature). That which on the other hand is, or may be, obscure, is found in the conditions which *hic et nunc* occasion, stimulate, in a certain sense determine, and materiate the free and necessary act of thought (of any spiritual activity, however poor) ; but this aspect is relatively secondary, and cannot justify the proposition that the content is not logically intelligible. For instance, the stimuli, *through which* a given sensation takes place, may perhaps be the subject of non-philosophical study : but how can the same be said in general of the *genesis* of a sensation, as if such a genesis, or “ psychogenesis,” had solely and entirely its *cause* in those conditions, instead of having in the first place its cause in an originality profoundly logical, rightly to be described as true ; as if it, as being a content of consciousness, however occasioned or conditioned, were not wholly intrinsicality, self-necessity, a logical value ; as if it were not *true*, that is, corresponding to an originality, to an internal necessity, to an intrinsic nature, which is not limited to the particular case ; as if it were not unity, light, form, individuation, a principle by which to interpret other moments of consciousness, activity, originality, joy, pleasure (as a cause), or pain,¹ and other values,

¹ Pain also is a *value of actuation or realisation*, and in a certain respect it is confounded, or identified essentially with pleasure : pleasure being understood as a principle, as a principle-value, a value of realisation, a *pleasure of realisation*, not as an abstract end.

which cannot be invented, which cannot be excogitated whimsically or arbitrarily, but which always bring us back within the very nature of thought, to its values and to its forms ; *and as if these values and forms were nothing in that process through which matter, as condition, becomes a material of expression or actuation, a reality of thought or consciousness, that is, in the genesis of a content of consciousness.*

11

But, in order to avoid abstraction and error, it is necessary that every science that intends to trace out in the past, and thence derive, the present conditions and forms of activity, should deepen, instead of denying, its philosophic content : because these conditions have, or have had, a quality and meaning only through the activity of mind, in so far as they are, or have been, a living experience, that is, in so far as they have, or have had, their moment of actuality, the *acme* of the present, which is absoluteness, and responsibility.

12

However much our attention may be directed to circumstances and to transitory ends, nevertheless the (philosophic) consciousness of the *eternal* and ever new values is the foundation of all knowledge ; and the deepening of this consciousness, that is, the studying of problems essentially philosophical, is the natural path followed by any thought that desires to gain a deeper experience both of itself and of

things. Problems of philosophic significance certainly are the secret force of every word in a story or drama, unless the author be wholly mediocre. And only a bad psychologist will presume to study, for instance, the formation of a man's intelligence and character, and at the same time ignore the problems concerning the nature of thought, the exigency of the unity and absoluteness of thought, the value and the force of a conviction, in so far and because it is *original*, the relation between *first* and *second causes*, and to what extent the former or the latter have to be principally considered. /,

13

It is the writer's hope that his studies may help to consolidate what is (in his opinion) the *high road* of philosophy, where philosophy gathers its best fruit, where it may boast of its most steady progress : namely, *the discovery of an internal fibre of the reality*. The inner nature of the law ; the intrinsic, that is, the internal and infinitely original, necessity of the values and forms of mental activity ; an identity of principle, which, whether as a fact or as a principle of the development of thought and as an immediate value, reveals the reality of a spiritual essence : these are problems, concepts, principles, realities, which under divers aspects repeat one and the same concept, that of the *intrinsic character* of the activity of thought.

It may be doubted whether philosophy has made any sure progress in this sense, seeing that liberty is often called by its defenders "contingency," and

spontaneity is described (in itself) as *extra legem*, "a-logical," capricious, arbitrary.

Even *the being able to be*, that is, the possibility or the power of a new and diverse realisation of being, is not a contingency, but a vocation! It belongs to the essence of every value of universality; it is an *eternal* principle, an intrinsic necessity of the spiritual activity, no less than an essential and constituent value and principle of the same.¹

Nor on the other hand can it be maintained that, for instance, the ethical values are not logical, merely because they cannot be constructed according to the *schemata* of rigidly constructive thought; neither can the same be said of sensation.²—When a living consciousness of the reality of thought is reached, when its nature is known, then its miracle is manifest (as I believe) in every impression of the senses: because, in the first place, a sensation however obscure and irrelevant is nevertheless a *unity* or *totality*. It is impossible to feel or suffer or imagine anything without its being a *unity*. And *there is no unity except in the universal (in the concept, in the identical, in that which is in itself necessary, in the infinite)*. Therefore *unity* means *essential identity*; similarly it means *originality, value of actuation or realisation* (for there is no universal, and no unity, except in the originality of realising, not in the thing actuated). The content of every moment of consciousness, in so far as psychic, is made up of eternity. How then are we outside

¹ Cf. *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 75-77.

² See in this volume *Index*; cf. also *Intelligence in Expression*, § 120.

logic ? How then shall we say that we only find a logical character in the relations existing between spontaneity and spontaneity ? This is to reduce to limits which are too restricted and indeed inadmissible the concept of a logical value or of (intrinsic) necessity ; it is not to know, or to lose sight of, the profoundly logical nature of thought.

But the doctrine which is more explicit, intentional and constructive may sometimes strangely err. This error does not prevent the concept of an originality and internal necessity of the values and forms of mental activity—that is, of every content of consciousness—from being the problem and the reality to which modern and contemporary philosophic thought is constantly directed, if only more or less implicitly : especially if we do not consider philosophic thought only in a more restricted acceptance of the word, but rather include, as we should, the critical and poetic thought of those writers of a higher order, whose innermost frame is absorbed by thought, and in whom we find experiences of thought and life characterised by surpassing truthfulness and depth. Then we find that this is really the progressive evolution of philosophic thought or its inexhaustible aim : the discovery of the true as organic ; that is, the *true* understood in the sense according to which we may say that—when we view being from its inner side—everything in the world is original and true ; the discovery and the deepening of the *true*, defined in the sense according to which that is true *which conforms to an inner nature of its own*.

14

Between Titian's vision—which certainly is a thought—and my perception of colour, the difference, although enormous, is only gradual.

It will be objected that it is easy to refer to the sense of sight in order to assert that sensation is activity, and, essentially, the activity of thought; but that we ought rather to cite the case of poorer sensations, for instance, that of touch. Apart from the rich and immediate significance which even a purely tactile sensation may have (in so far as it can be rigorously distinguished), it should be borne in mind that also a tactile sensation, in the unity of consciousness, is a moment, *not an element*, of the latter: a moment of consciousness, which does not "associate itself," or is not "associated," with other moments, but which unites itself with them. And in that union there is at once the *simplicity*, the identification in the *necessity* of a value or of a relation, which is the distinctive characteristic of thought. In the concept of resistance, not as a discursive and explicit concept, but as the sense of a resistance (which is an intensive infinite), a tactile sensation at once unites itself and unites us with the real, in a unity beyond all limits.

15

It seems needless to refuse the doctrine of "sense-data." Things like elementary sensations or sense-data do not occur in our inner experience. A sensation is a *totality*. Surface-sensations, which are not also depth-sensations, have no existence. On

this subject cf. H. N. Randle, *Sense-data and Sensible Appearances in Size-Distance Perception* (*Mind*, July 1922).¹

16

Every life is a process of growing in an integrity of values and forms ; the actuating of an originality of values and forms, infinitely necessary. It is not

¹ H. N. Randle, *loc. cit.* : " By drawing a clear distinction between the psychological fact, the sensible appearance, and the psychologist's fiction, the sense-datum, we definitely reject that misleading psychological metaphor which makes of sensations or sense-data the raw material of knowledge, the stuff on which the mind operates. There is no such stuff of knowledge, no such raw material, introspectively discoverable ; and, if there were, mind could not operate with such refractory material, for nothing could be done with it beyond that combining and disjoining to which (consistently enough) the older psychology confined the functions of the intellect " (p. 303).

" . . . the sensible appearance is not *superficial*."

" . . . the superficies (the supposed sense-datum) cannot be separated from the depth of meaning which constitutes and underlies the sensible appearance. The sensible appearance is (so to speak) essentially tri-dimensional. Indeed the perception of the third dimension in space is possible only because the sensible appearance has this ' third dimension ' of experience, namely immanent and constitutive meaning " (p. 304).

" . . . we do ' see ' distance, and we do ' see ' things solid " (p. 304).

" . . . the sense-datum is supposed to precede a meaning which it subsequently acquires ; whereas the sensible appearance is inseparable from and preconditioned by " (cf. however *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay, § 5) " the meaning which it expresses " (pp. 304-305).

" . . . the sensible appearance . . . has the plasticity which is characteristic of an effort to express a meaning " (p. 305).

" Experience is not connected through ' ideas ' and on the surface, but in the depth through meanings—and to confine it to superficial impressions—sense-data—is necessarily to disintegrate it.

" The entirely gratuitous difficulty which is often felt about the perception of motion, in particular, simply arises from the substitution of sense-data for the truly functional thought-element, the sensible appearance " (p. 305).

" . . . there is no reason why the moving continuity should not find expression in the sensible appearance, though it defies every attempt to reduce it to a series of ' impressions of sense ' " (p. 306).

an adding of attitudes to attitudes, of notions to notions ; it is not an increase through successive accretions. But he who, adopting more or less a materialistic view of things, overlooks the character of intrinsicity which is peculiar to every life value, will imagine that he can explain a child's progress by means of successive acquisitions of heterogeneous qualities, will suppose that there is a radical difference between moment and moment, and fails to see (for instance) that the difference between child and man is very small compared with the resemblance (for in the child we find essentially, *ex principio*, the same dispositions). And he will say that the child at first has no real thoughts, but only impressions of the senses ; that he notices colours but not forms, or vice versa ; that, from the standpoint of children, it is impossible to use epithets like *beautiful*, or *good*, in the proper meaning of these words : these ideas are reached later on. In reality children would never reach them through those processes for which the positivist has a special predilection, namely, by starting from an egoism gratuitously conceded, and by passing through innumerable experiences (although recourse be had to the experiences of the species and to enormous periods of time ; cf. my *Principii di Etica*, § 112). But these ideas are reached with wonderful readiness and *necessity*, and much sooner than what we should expect from the *schemata* and from the predictions of a system which, far from recognising an originality that allows of no derivation or substitution, hastens to admit whatever product can be attributed to a constructive will, which in itself is void of content.

In fact, a child knows the beautiful and the good from the earliest months of his life. Of course he cannot understand the beauty of a work of art, for which is needed a preparation, a deepened and refined sensibility, a mature experience in the wider sense. By the beautiful I mean here everything that has a meaning for a child, exercises his thought, and is therefore *a form, an expression* to it. The suckling forthwith looks at the lights, remembers and seeks them. Why is this? A reaction to the stimulus of an inferior order—some will say; others, that it is the most natural thing in the world, and wholly unimportant. . . . But this is a matter of inestimable value, that nothing can replace. It is already expression, mental presentment; it is a necessity and value, made distinct by language, a “category” of intelligence. The “categories” of intelligence (if we should regard them as more than one) exist already all of them in a child. And he who regards a child attentively and sympathetically certainly gains the impression of an evolution of attitudes intrinsically necessary, which, *in order to be*, only await the material, the occasion, for their formation; he sees nothing pointing to the development of attitudes successively acquired and profoundly heterogeneous. Persons of dull perception—at least as regards their philosophic views—will assert that an infant of a few months is good or bad, according to his state of health. Yet essential attitudes, profound differences of character reveal themselves in children—and this is a matter of common observation. The recognition on the child’s part, in divers ways and on different occasions, of

something superior to his own desire ; the sharp distinction he draws between mine and thine, before he can speak ; or, again, his readiness to yield, or give, and this without any apparent sign of weakness, but because a feeling of exclusion, of opposition, and of distrust is not on the watch ; his being more or less affected by the presence of others ; the joy with which he recognises persons ; in these and in a thousand other aspects a complete moral nature is manifest and actual. Take a child of nine months who sees his father and uncle wrestling in play ; there is a stiff contest, and no evidence of play, and the child breaks out crying desperately. If they had not been persons dear to him, perhaps he would not have cried. In any case, does not this show that he distinguishes between *concord* and *discord* ? The same child (and there may be a thousand others : but I speak of what I have happened to see), when a year old, notices the figures on the placards in the streets with more interest than natural objects. Is not this a sign that one and the same psyche (it seems needless to make this remark !) dwells in him and in the men who transformed and also simplified the usual aspect of things ?—The fact is that in new experiences values and forms certainly not pre-existing, yet necessary in themselves, are elaborated ; and the child's intelligence and progress can only be understood as the revelation of active and final necessities ; as a spontaneity endowed with an inexhaustible and ever-unexplored treasure of its own, free, but not without an intrinsic character, that is, a non-arbitrary nature which belongs to its whole content.

17

An infant approaches his little toy animals, and makes them kiss one another ; while from his tiny mouth issue resounding smacks. Who has taught him this ? Is it imitation ? atavism ? The principle of love, which he understands, is neither imitation nor atavism alone ; it is something more.

18

It seems that a child understands everything—except what is not materially possible for him to grasp. In his own sphere he is whole and perfect ; his gestures, his attitudes, whether awake or asleep, all his acts are full of grace. He makes a thousand little inventions, which are never strange, but always harmonious. His notions, his faculties, his intentions show nothing limited, narrow or fitful. There is nothing clumsy ; nothing to remind us of a machine which up to a certain moment only displays certain movements.

19

Only a necessity-finality of values, intrinsic, infinitely original, only this deep-lying necessity, this *eternity in the act*, this alone makes a man whole, not defective, not clumsy, and in his movements not arbitrary, not inconsiderate.

And it is in the innocence of a child that this intrinsicity—as it seems to me—may especially be seen. The *innocence* of a child is not a negative concept. It is a full reality, which seems at once to conceal and reveal an infinite wisdom. And

so in fact it is ; nor can its value be otherwise explained.

20

An originality of values and of forms (as I maintain) brings the life-germ to ever higher forms until birth, then to maturity, and to old age. (And it invades and makes alive again even dead tissues, according to what experience seems to teach, unless decay has already begun.) Lastly, the same principle of *essential identification*, of synthesis in the a priori, ceases to realise itself, to be : *as if in the hardened material it could no longer renew itself, increase, and follow its vocation*. Or does it more necessarily cease to realise itself, to exist, in *that* individuation (in that collected wealth, in that cluster of material elements), *because of a more internal rhythm* ?

21

The landscape in a picture, and in nature, as seen even by one who is not a painter, in varying degree or intensity, is made of *eternal* values. Space expresses *activity as an infinite principle*. It relieves us (or it may do so) of our individual narrowness. Space is "clear," "free," "transparent," "pure"—and all these epithets express essential spiritual values. The azure spaces derive their intuitive reality from one and the same reality, namely, our liberty ; which identifies itself with the spontaneity—in a certain sense infinitely impersonal—of thought. The lofty mountain, surrounded by others ; silent moments, the stainless sky, the clouds ; every separate thing, and every thing diffused ; all living

things, and every thing stiff and cold ; every grace of life, and geometrical figures, or any thing bearing the impress of man's constructive mind ; and that existence of the external world, which implies an objectivity and a space such that perhaps no phantom can equal open nature : all this may give us a living consciousness of the intrinsic or eternal of thought ; because every object is a realising of intrinsic modes of thought, and all the more intensely and visibly in proportion as thought is *active* (originally, not through our *arbitrium* or extrinsic action).—Now philosophy is a useful school, so that the soul may awake to those visions, so that the landscape, teeming, as it were, with multitudinous beauties, may call our soul, and become its sacred poem :—because it frees us from certain errors and from a kind of inertness, by teaching that this internal and infinite necessity, to which is suitably applied the name of *eternity*, is not an illusion.

22

Judgment as to the value of a work of art cannot but be *original*, underived, immediate : it must impose itself immediately ; that is, *the value of the work* must impose itself immediately, and the judgment formed can only be that same value. It will be that same value in a different and more explicit form and with reference to other values and evidences ; it will be an interpretation, an explanation, a development ; but not a demonstration or a deduction of that value by starting from principles, criteria, examples, tables of values. These principles and criteria are not useless, and indirectly they ought

to be of some assistance ; but they are destined to give way, to fall, before a real value, which imposes itself *because of its immediate value*. These criteria are indeed often dangerous, and all the more when they are definite, precise, minute, and come from competent persons. It is for this reason that the artist, who is really a creator and profoundly original, seeks a wider range of appeal than that offered by the competent, even when the latter are most fair, most honest and broad-minded. For in estimating the value of a work of art, the same thing happens as when we judge of what is good and evil—where the same truth is more evident.

Let us suppose a new and affecting instance of charity, the value of which I am to estimate. The recognition that the Gospel exalts charity ; the knowledge that charity is a living and efficient consciousness *of activity as a principle*, which raises us out of all that is, within ourselves, more exclusive, ephemeral, narrow ; the kinship of a given value with other values about which we have no doubt ; the general consensus of opinion ; the experiences by which I have been delivered from dullness and errors :—all these things may aid me in forming my judgment. Nevertheless, even if, in order to do so, I search for reasons *pro et contra*, and authorities, and instances, and investigate the nature of man, and what are essentially and generally its highest utterances :—all this I shall do only secondarily and in a subordinate inquiry. Before everything else I shall seek *that moment* in its truth, and I shall be ready to correct and reform, if need be, my conception of human nature and of the highest values, and

not hesitate, in the last resort, to challenge in the concrete case even the most settled traditions and renounce my most cherished convictions.

23

No value exists, nor can it be known, outside its original realisation, and this realisation is a direct imposing of itself, by virtue of that value, and not otherwise.

24

It is certainly impossible to go outside the nature of spiritual activity : but its achievements, the direction in which it concentrates its value, can only be known by experience.

25

Experience is necessary for knowledge and cannot be replaced. Nothing can be deduced from principles, except by realising them, that is, by experiencing them.

Deduction also is experience, in so far as it is a realising of that synthesis which is the conclusion ; and this conclusion cannot be wholly derived from its conditions, but it is a novelty admitting of no substitute, being luminous and entire in proportion as it is not received passively from thought, that is, only when a demand for truth, for complete comprehension, is newly realised.

26

As a rule, *we see immediately* whether what is affirmed be true or false, whether it respond to our conception. In the most unforeseen experiences, in the most irrelevant trifles, we at once become aware

of that which does not agree with our conception, with our central and most profound conception, with our most intimate convictions, with our point of view, and with every idea we may have as to the reality. This could certainly not be if our minds were only co-ordinating and selective machines, however perfect. We are thus led to think of a principle of unity omnipresent in thought, which in fact is thought. This power which our thought possesses of recognising what is conformable to it, in applications entirely unexpected and far removed from all familiar knowledge and experience, finds its sole explanation in the fact that the activity of thought, that is, thought, is a value originally operative, independent of our *arbitrium*; because it is *a principle of identification*, whose nature or essence consists in this, namely, that the uniting or identifying in an originality and eternity of values, and the discovery at one and the same time of this eternity or intrinsic character is a value and a cause.

27

Conscience, as long as it is free, is able to comprehend and meet the most serious responsibilities. As long as it is free, there is marvellous wisdom in it: but if subject to external discipline, it is liable to immeasurable blunders.

And the same is true of cognisant thought, which in its full liberty is whole, and true. But an "immediate" judgment is precisely that which is wholly and absolutely free, that is, *original*: it is not one *which rests on preceding reflections without realising them afresh or re-making them*. By an "immediate"

judgment I mean a judgment which is original, and which is therefore a moment of *liberty* and a moment of spiritual *necessity*; and therefore a moment of *integrity* in the values of mind. Immediateness here signifies *a reality of values which are a subject-agent, which exist of themselves, which form themselves not as a mere derivation from given elements, but through a vis a fronte, through the value of their making or realising themselves.* This is originality of thought, this is immediateness of judgment.—As to the fact that such actuality (or *novelty*, in so far as it is *present*) forms a moment of truth, a moment of absoluteness, this is another matter; nor must we regard that absoluteness as anything but an exigency (or effort or vocation) which can always be found realised with varying intensity.

28

Others understand by an “immediate” thought an abstract and unreal moment of thought: either thought viewed as mere subjectivity, or as mere objectivity, as matter or nature in itself, that is, no longer really as thought. But this acceptation of the term “immediate” is of value only in relation to constructions which seem to me fictitious.

In a certain sense thought is always “mediation” (mediateness, relation); and likewise I maintain that it is entirely arbitrary to assume the “immediateness” of “elementary sensations,” which are supposed to be mental or psychic states, or “psychical matter,” having no significance or universality. Thought is “mediation” because it is essentially *unity*, a principle of identifica-

tion.¹ But in this sense the term "mediation" seems to me neither happy nor clear, because it suggests the idea of a constructive process (mediating) which does not faithfully represent the spontaneity of thought, and because it throws into too strong relief an unessential distinction between subject and object (see *Intelligence in Expression*, § 84).

The sense of this word which I prefer corresponds rather to that which occurs in literary and artistic criticism. I call a thought "immediate" when the image, the value or the form which expresses (realises) itself, in a word, the presentment, is the true active subject, that is, life manifesting its splendours, *its causes*, its very self in its determinations and specifications, and in its kinships *ex principio*. I call this vital process "immediate" (or "direct") because there is no acting subject outside the very value which realises itself, and this is the subject. The interposition of another subject (for instance, that of the author in a scientific or artistic work) between the presentments and a definite end they are made to serve; the interposition of a will which treats them as elements which are identifiable because they are fixed, and studies them according to the logic of existents and coexistents, and of material conditionality, thereby losing their intimate intelligence; the fact of there being—at the cost of the *subjectivity* and *truth* of the content—an object which is not a subject, a subject which acts from without—this is the contrary of immediateness. The value of immediateness is (as I understand it) the value of an operative process *ab intus*.

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay *ad fin.*, §§ 3 and 4.

29

It is incumbent on the historian—and therein lies the difficulty and the secret of his art—to unite a living consciousness of the unity of the principle-values with a jealous sense of the originality and novelty of every experience. If it were not for the consciousness of a reality of principles—in the form of a profound humanity—he would not be prepared to interpret events, in fact he would not even recognise them. But if, on the other hand, he raises them to *a-temporal entities*, or to *materialistic laws*, then the principles, the laws, the criteria, the values, the “recourses” really become prejudices, preconceptions, *schemata*, which are inhuman and false, or rough, and more or less puerile fictions.

But inasmuch as the conception of internal law is not easy to maintain (at least in the case of more explicit thought), there is another subterfuge by which an attempt is made to save both the principles and liberty. The principles are regarded as formal, as not constituting, or only partly so, the content of the actions they rule, and thus space is left for a certain liberty. Only this poor and false conception cannot be one of the sincere convictions of a man who thinks earnestly and clearly, whether historian or poet.

And to do this is a thing most arduous and rare :
to be

“ . . . the man who loves thy bosom,
thy deep bosom,
O Eternity, the man who loves thee ! ”

and at the same time to seek, to know, to recognise

the stimulus of the present, and finding Eternity in the present, to understand that the present is not for that reason annulled, but strengthened and made more real (as liberty, as time, as individuation), and withal to preserve all due proportion.

30

When we are carried away by the *necessity* of truth—and similarly, by the necessity of every other value intimately final—we are *free* ; and we see that liberty and (spiritual) necessity are one and the same thing.

31

If we exclude liberty—the consciousness of an effort or a vocation whose actuality is not given—we exclude also responsibility. It is here that we are in close contact with the unity of the two aspects of *liberty* and *necessity* ; because on the other hand responsibility is felt as a spiritual bond, as a *necessity*.

(For the connection between the two aspects of liberty and necessity see *Intelligence in Expression*, § 103 ; and in this volume see *Index*.)

32

In the vain effort to touch an *arbitrium* freed from every internal bond, the reality of spiritual activity may emerge : the reality of a liberty, which is not a contingency ; the reality of an internal necessity. For there have been instances of men—or we may imagine such—filled with a monstrous delight at feeling themselves emancipated not only from every custom or (external) law, but also from every scruple,

from every internal necessity :—and this to the point of committing crimes, of determining to reach the extreme limit of grossness, of vileness, of cowardice, of cruelty ; in order to free themselves not only from the public conscience, not only from their own interests, but even from their own conscience ; in order to find themselves outside every internal necessity, and assert themselves as an *absolute initiative*, as an *eradicated individuation*.—But such persons appear to attain nothing but a vacuity, a deficiency of thought and life ; or even the bare spirit of rebellion, if it have any value, shows itself as a principle, not as a mere initiative or a mere *arbitrium*. For is not also the value of mere *arbitrium* a limitation in the conception of an empty liberty, and, above all, a *prime*, which mere *arbitrium* would have no reason nor capacity for positing ?

33

Concentration is the spiritual principle of life. I remember how, in natural history, vast periods of past experience seem to be resumed and treasured in actual organisms. Similarly (but more closely, intimately, immediately, as is proper to philosophy) I regard the inner nature of a thought, where so many human motives and so many varied experiences are gathered together in such great simplicity. Now this simplicity (or assumption in the present, or identification) does not proceed from an abstract ideation, but from a conceptualising or essentialising of activity in its principle and principles, that is, by deepening ourselves in the latter (see note 105).

34

Every one identifies himself with and evokes the past, and questions the future, through original and eternal values ; and there is a demand, stronger than is apparent to our more explicit thought, which requires that at least some trace of man's works and hopes should not be lost, but transmitted to posterity for ever. A responsibility which involves the universe presses on the present moment.

Every life is not a combination of elements, but an heroic concentration.

35

The past at times with unexpected calm returns to our memory, where it is lighted up with a sweet sense of truth (if it is not *lived through* in such a way that it becomes absolutely the present, and no longer, strictly speaking, a recollection—as happens in the case of a bitter complaint, which involves the future). But in the present there is a responsibility, a dissatisfaction—and the actual moment of the present, which the absolute, in its most varied forms, torments, is really life.

36

In any story, or narrative, everything may be subordinated to that particular moment of life which is considered with intensity : and just as, for instance, we may say : “ revolutions pass, but mother's love is eternal,” so the terms may be inverted. Everything is ephemeral from an external point of view : nevertheless the absolute is everywhere where there is originality (activity). By the term

“ absolute ” I mean a value which is known as the full value of mind, and which is infinite in its necessity.¹ There are, of course, infinite gradations in the wealth and height of synthesis. But it is also true that the actual moment of the present carries all the weight as well as all the lightness of life. And every event, every instant, is beaten out, “ marked ” by the absolute ; for every one has, or has had, his present, that wonderful artificer. Every existing form has had its present, its novelty, its moment, its *absolute*.

And he who succeeds in making *present* in any representation of facts any moment, which is otherwise irrelevant, subordinates the whole to that moment (even if he makes of that moment a principle of subordination, a moment of renunciation, a something which aims to serve something else, and be in itself secondary).

37

The term “ present ” is here understood in its usual sense, as opposed to the past and the future. I state, for instance, that every fact—in a certain order of phaenomena, if not in the whole physical world—has had its “ present ” ; that is, the moment in which it was *act*, not *fact*, the moment in which it was activity in actuating or forming itself, in its novelty ; the moment in which it was (provided the word be well understood) *activity*. The present (the actual) is the true reality—if we follow a non-mechanical conception.

Nevertheless there is in the term “ present ” the

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 113 and 91.

idea of excluding as far as possible a spatial multiplicity—a problem which the term “actual” does not specially consider. And when the term “present” is adopted more particularly in this spatial connection, in order to avoid losing sight of the other concept, that of activity, it is better to say : *present and active*.

The term “immanent” still more explicitly excludes the idea of a given reality being external to the act. It means : present, non-existent outside the act, operative in the act, constitutive of the act, wholly present and active ; it implies the concept of originality and universality. It is however a term which says too much and too little, and whose meaning is derived from philosophic traditions—whose implications ought to be agreed about—rather than from common parlance and from the language of poetry. And I maintain that the terms of these modes of expression should preferably be kept, because they express more directly an ever-renewing and non-fictitious reality, which it behoves us always to search into.

First Causes and Second Causes

38

Certain modes of expression and certain conceptions seem to favour the belief that the character of universality of thought is explained by referring to the old and far-reaching experiences collected by it. Thus it is said, for instance, that primitive words contain the wisdom of the race : hence their value,

their deep meaning which is full of truth and not limited to any time or place ; hence their stable validity. A profound thought is assuredly deeply rooted in the great mass of past experiences, and in the race. But it renews these experiences ; it does not universalise them, does not make them become truth, unless it renews them, that is, unless it spiritualises them. The universality of a thought is given by its spirituality, that is, by its internal necessity, (or with reference to a kindred concept) by the *originality* of its motives (values, *schemata*) : it is not essentially given by the fact that the thought in question touches a larger number of experiences. Certainly the principles which are most essential and least specified reach up to the interpretation of life in a vaster circle. A principle in its essential meaning interprets not only the activity of one man, but that of all men, and of all creatures. But the force of this universality does not arise from the fact that a given thought is the thought of a very large number of men and of generations, and reflects a very large number of experiences. It does not appear that massed experiences must of themselves produce universality. The passing through many experiences may avail to awaken, to form, values which are profound and true ; but in themselves experiences heaped together might bring about opposite effects. And if we have recourse to the wisdom of the race, in order to explain the universal and almost prophetic value of certain truths, it should be remembered that the race by itself rather diversifies and separates, and may be a principle of one-sidedness instead of truth.—Let us consider the character of universality

which belongs to poetry. A poet is universal, in the inner and true sense of the word, in proportion to his greatness ; and he is still more universal when his utterance is in verse, with full spontaneity (originality). This, for instance, can be seen, as I think, in the dramas of Shakespeare. When his thought rises and concentrates itself in verse, it is full of clearness and truth, and it would be difficult to discover his nationality, to find an indication that might lead us to suppose, for instance, that he was not an Italian ; whereas in the prose passages of his dramas we may seem to find something that savours particularly of the English character or stamp. Is this because in the prose passages there is more of that which is exclusively national, whether as regards custom or date, while the poetic passages abound in what belongs to the race ? It is not the race, but life in its eternal principles. If sometimes human utterances override custom, traditions, and the profound differences between people and people, this is not due to the race, but to an *originality*, which at the same time is *universality*, proper to life.

The essential and universal character of a thought cannot be explained by reference to the wisdom of the race, nor to all the experience of the past. Certainly that which is essential, and *therefore* universal, realises itself and is revealed in the spontaneity of forces which are less explicit and intentional, and quickens into life the whole organism, and all the wealth of past experiences. But it would be making an idol of the past, if we were to attribute to our organism, in so far as formed, constituted, the *truth*, and not rather *one-sidedness* (and all that is *limitation*,

which is proper to matter, to the form formed, to the conditions *qua* conditions).—It is precisely this which the nature or essence of poetic thought puts in evidence. Poetic thought exists in so far as it intends to overpass the limits of past experiences, and of every reality not being the very activity of thought (and these limits are the individual, the race, *humanity itself, qua* conditions, structure, traces). In the liberty (originality) of poetic thought, the race disappears, and along with many other conditions it is transformed into truth. Every one claims to have given convictions because they are just or true or well founded, not because, for instance, an ancestor of his was a Teuton or a Latin. The past is the wealth and more than the wealth of thought, but it would be useless to look to the past for the principle of its universality.

39

Explanation by means of second causes not only affronts the philosophical conscience. It is also the commonest offence against good sense (which revolts from it), and against views which are less one-sided. This happens when the attempt is made to derive a man's convictions, for instance, from his state of health, from the education he has received, from the climate, from the place, from the date, from the nationality of his grandfather, from the weight of his brain.—A similar case is the explanation of rhythm by deriving it from *the greater facility and economy* with which rhythm enables things to be done, and the attempt to know rhythm and to find its explanation, not where it is nearest to the forms

of theoretical and more intelligible thought, not where it is "all unfolded" (or in a higher degree), but in "elementary forms": not in music or poetry, but in handling the oar.

40

Doubtless if at this moment the weight of my brain were different, I should not have this thought, I should not be the same as I am. But if any one told me that I have a given conviction because my brain is so made, he would deny the spirit of my thought, its most secret and intimate moving cause, which is most necessary, most essential to its being.—It is here that we see the reality of the universality of thought: the reality of a character of intrinsicity which is not a fact (properly speaking, not *only* a fact), but a principle, a vocation, a demand of absoluteness.

There are some who make no distinction, who rejoin, for instance, that a man has a given opinion both because it is true, and because he is an Italian or an Englishman, a young or an old man, and the like: and they do not see that the first and the other reasons alleged cannot be put on the same plane.

41

Is it necessary that psychology in studying the thought of a given individual, or group of individuals, should reduce it to a psychical determinism which offends the thinking subject? Is it necessary that it should refuse to recognise a demand of truth and absoluteness, a principle of integrity in the values

and in the *schemata* of thought, an effort, a vocation, which is the most intimate and efficient reality ?

42

“ We see, because we have eyes ” : this is a one-sided consideration of second causes. Hence the discovery (or new discoveries and confirmations of the same fact), namely, that the sense of sight is not exclusively localised in the eyes, is found to be extremely surprising.—The truth is that we have eyes because this need of seeing, for its immediate value and finality, is essential to life (not only and not so much for its usefulness as an instrument of life, as an instrument for the attainment of ends).

Philosophy and Psychology

43

There is good reason for the statement that logic must not be based on psychology, so long as by psychology we understand a science which, while studying the psyche in man and in the different animal species, and generalising on the results of the observations made, after the fashion of the other natural sciences, leaves out of account that which in the study of the psyche is the fundamental reality and the problem most fraught with consequences : that is, an originality which is not chance, a character of internal necessity of the facts of consciousness ; a kinship *ex principio* between the different forms, which is neither an empty name nor a mere instrument of classification or interpretation ; an identity

of principle ; the psyche which is *logic in its essence*, that is, *an eternity* of values and forms—which is not contradicted by the novelty or the non-predetermination of these very values and forms. But a psychology such as this can only rest on error, and ought to be abandoned.

44

If any one should choose to view a thought as a mere event, thereby taking no account of it as *a principle of essential identification*—and in consequence disregarding it as *thought*, as *truth*—he would attempt the impossible, and certainly would fall into one error after another (unless, in so far as—and this is in fact what happens—the spontaneity and spiritual integrity of thought, that is, good sense, availed to save him in part from these conceptions, which, especially when a living thought is lacking, are upheld by force of will, and by presumption). In fact, it cannot be asserted, seriously, and with a full understanding of the meaning of the words, that any one should study thought and the states of consciousness as if they were mere successions in time !

And yet this proposition that in studying a presentment we may leave out of account that which in it is an originality, an internal necessity, an infinite intrinsicity, an exigency of universality, of absoluteness, a value or spirit of truth, seems to be a matter of general acceptance. As though *the necessity of truth*, that is, the realising of intrinsic values and forms, identical with themselves in more than one point, were not the motive-power of thought, the condition and the reason of its revealing itself, of its formation, of its existence.

45

The principle of universality is an "immediate datum" of consciousness, and ought therefore to be one of the essential subjects of psychology.

46

Dreams afford special interest, because in them *activity* and *mechanism* appear in their extreme forms. On the one hand the dream-texture is composed of values and forms which lie outside our *arbitrium* and come before us with an appearance of spontaneity and self-necessity—and this perhaps oftener than generally occurs in the waking state; values and forms which, if they make no claim to interpret the external reality and to substitute themselves in place of facts or to anticipate events, yet as values in themselves, for instance as moments of remorse, of anguish, of humiliation, of pride, of charity, of joy, or of hope, they are as real in dreams as in the waking state.¹ Sometimes indeed in a dream they have a greater value of *necessity*, are manifested with such a character of internal necessity, of non-ephemeral originality, with such a character of truth, with such evidence of a character which no ingenuity can replace, which is neither arbitrary nor conventional, neither derived, nor derivable, nor casual, that impresses us with extraordinary power, like a thing of nature and at the same time portentous and divine.

¹ The cryptaesthetic (preternormal) phaenomena, which occur in dreams, should be here considered. In fact, I must confess that when I wrote the present book, which has now been translated, I was almost ignorant of them. Yet the above statement, as far as it goes, still remains true.

In the interpretation and foreseeing of events a dream may sometimes tell more than the waking state, just because of the genuine realisation of values and forms of knowledge and of life. In so far as future events probably realise given essential values of spiritual activity—in accordance with those *nexus* which some would call *psychological*, and which nevertheless are full of necessity and truth, and ought to be called *logical*—a dream may sometimes suggest to us that which our thought in the waking state did not suggest, our thought which in this case is less *awake* in the waking state than in the dream.¹

But at the same time we find in dreams, with remarkable frequency, that which, as it seems, must be referred to something purely physiological, to whatever in the cerebral processes may be most mechanical, blind and fortuitous. This is the case when the thought of the apparent dream-texture appears less than ever *active* in reuniting things according to profound logical *nexus*, according to kinships *ex principio*.

Also in the most characteristic phaenomena of memory we find sometimes, very distinctly, a spiritual factor—logical *nexus*, *ex principio*: that which is intelligence,—and on the other hand that which seems to be chiefly mechanical (though not wholly so: cf. note 56).

Now how can the psychologist study dreams and

¹ F. C. Prescott (*The Poetic Mind*, New York, 1922), while he maintains that there is a close connection between dreams and poetry, contrasts them with *constructive* thought, or abstract reason, which he aptly calls "voluntary thought." Yet this connection has been overestimated, and is misleading; see note 47.

memory without meeting, and being obliged to make his own, the problems of philosophy? Without taking up the problem of a spiritual principle, which is *responsibility, essential* identification? The problem of an originality, of an internal necessity, of a reality of principles? Without making an effort to deepen his conception, with a view to being better able to discern that which probably must be ascribed to a spiritual originality, or, on the other hand, to conditions, in a blind necessity of relations and equivalents, and to habits? And without striving to discover where intelligence and where mechanism seem to be uppermost?—*Intelligence has its own internal cause in that self-realising of an identity of principle.* The nature of intelligence, the relation between intelligence and a mechanical element contained in it, are problems which psychology (if only in order to understand and collect the bare facts) cannot avoid, and through which, however little it widens out its material, it cannot but be really philosophy.¹

The past is not evoked, the future is not questioned, nor does the latter, when taken up into the present, render the present greater or more serious, nor can a word be said whose truth overpasses the present

¹ Whoever may think that this conclusion is obvious and useless should read, for instance, W. Windelband (*Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, § 44): "A characteristic change in the general scientific movement during the nineteenth century is the detachment of psychology from philosophy, with regard to principles—a detachment which has been steadily progressive, and now may be considered as almost complete." (There are, it is true, in the different attitudes, justifications and meanings which the words, thus isolated, cannot put in evidence.) For this *detachment* it is not psychology that, in my opinion, must be accounted responsible, but—indirectly—philosophy.

moment, except through an intrinsic necessity of values and forms. Every expectation of ours, and the very continuity of the spiritual life, are based on an *essential* identity of psychic activity in its every moment.

Undoubtedly the character of originality and of intrinsic necessity of activity in its values and forms ought to be made the object of those studies which claim to be positive.

47

*The Misleading Comparison between
Art and Dreams*

1.—Although it is possible provisionally to associate art with dreams, nevertheless, from a more comprehensive point of view, it is desirable to avoid doing so, for such connection has been much overdrawn, and there is in it more error than truth.

Since we discern in art a certain spontaneity of conceptions and forms ; and since also we are surprised in dreams by a reality that does not consist solely of external things, and which is independent of our arbitrary will : therefore we are led to establish a particular analogy between art and dreams ; and we fail to see that the same spontaneity always belongs to thought. This is the mistake : we seek original and forceful realities in dreams and in the subconscious or in the “unconscious,” because we do not see them in the waking state ; the deep fountains of life are looked for in dreams, because they are not recognised in the waking state. For instance, reason is not apprehended as a demand of

objectivity, or of 'impersonality,' which is original and cannot be replaced by any design or contrivance, but it is conceived of as an external control, and, as it were, a negligible reality of not very deep content, whose problem is solved.—The fact that there is something in our dreams which is not the product of our constructive effort is not a sufficient reason for associating them with art, in comparison with every other form of psychic activity.

2.—We may at first glance perceive a feature of resemblance in a certain dependence of the activity of thought on the representative elements, that is, on the material of expression in general, both in dreams and art. In fact, representative elements, I should say, of an occasional nature, which certainly would be overlooked in following practico-rational schemes of logic, play a very great part in the apparent texture of dreams. We find, however, that it is precisely in this respect that art more especially differs from dreams; namely, *in the mode of expression*. And this is all the more apparent, if we follow the interpretation of dreams according to Freud.¹ Not only do we not find in poetry or in any form of art (cf. §§ 4 and 7) the ambiguous figures with manifold meanings, the substitutions of persons, the "disguises," the compound images with contradictory characters, such as we undoubtedly meet in dreams, and which indeed, according to Freud and the psycho-analytic school, are intimately and inseparably connected with the peculiar nature of a dream (a desire expressed through tortuous ways):

¹ Sigm. Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, 7th ed., 1922. [Engl. Transl., *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 9th reprint, London, 1922.]

but expression in dreams differs from expression in art for a more essential reason, and especially if we are to follow the doctrine of the psycho-analysts—who nevertheless are just the men who seek to interpret art by the light (?) of dreams. It seems that thought in a dream adopts the raw material of our sensations *in its poverty*; that it often gathers up our mental presentments of the waking state such as we already possess, and almost without daring to touch them—in connection with the new concept which is to be expressed: fragments or masses of mental pictures, taken from our preceding experiences and not remoulded, conglomerations of presentments whose coherence and adequacy in connection with any meaning vanishes as soon as considered apart from the first illusion. And if we wish to follow the doctrine with which I am here especially concerned, the real thoughts of a dream (the latent dream-content), as a rule, would seem to express themselves only in an indirect and symbolic manner, through a kind of mask; that is, in the apparent texture of the dream, which therefore would all the more appear to be not really *formed* by the dominating thought, not intimately penetrated by it.

Indirect or symbolic expression, when it is merely indirect or symbolic, when the symbol is not modelled intimately and delicately by the idea, but is used only as an instrument to indicate the idea approximately, such expression instead of being art is its contrary (and in this I state nothing new). In art each expressive moment is woven, so to say, out of night and day, and carries within itself their significance. Each moment exalts and annuls its par-

tiouularity. Every note carries the eternal and the ephemeral; the form and its intimate, infinite demand. What we discover in poetry, and what constitutes it, is certainly not the practical transitory interest, but the originality and eternity of thought in its values and forms: and these values *are formed in and through the expression*. Contrariwise, to return to what I was saying, it seems that in dreams mental pictures are relatively inert, that they are not spiritualised, that is, they are not (except in a feeble manner) *active*: and that they have no rhythm. They have an hallucinatory character, as Freud himself agrees. Doubt, in a certain sense, as well as a thousand shades and attitudes of thought or consciousness in the waking state, seem to be lacking to them.

Art and dreams differ then from one another in the mode of expression, because the mental presentments of the apparent texture of dreams show less *activity* and *truth*; and also on account of their alleged symbolic character. In art a thought *is*, because it forms or realises itself in mental presentments—and therefore in art we *see* the characterising and creative principle, the active vital principle; it is here manifested to us, I believe, more than in other forms of activity. Moreover, especially if we follow the Freudian doctrine, we must exclude from dreams that which is the true characteristic of art, namely, *the unity of concept and expression*.

3.—What surprises us as a trait common to poetry and dreams is a certain independence or autonomy both in respect to our will and, to a certain extent, in respect to everyday life and to the happenings of

the moment. This correspondence, however, only affords, as I said above, a negative criterion of resemblance.—The truth is that the dream's independence of our will and of everyday life does not prevent its having in general a practical content, volitions and desires, anxiety, distress, and images which are connected with practical activity, often a miserably practical one. We take part in pleasant or unpleasant happenings, we regard as real something desired or feared,—but the cognitive and contemplative spirit, the mental presentment which is a limitless presence, a communion of every one in that truth, a necessity and eternity of aspects—beyond the particular case, beyond that place and time—space and a boundless expanse, the strength of a dominating serene thought: this is but rarely to be found, I think (cf. § 11). We rather meet with anguish and distress, not the presence of a silent immense harmony, which has in the very act its principle and its reality.

4.—It is asserted that the poet expresses ideas which are disliked by his age and which especially are not conformable to current morality and are repressed in the “unconscious”: therefore in dreams, as in poetry, it is alleged that we listen to voices which in everyday life encounter obstacles and vetoes, voices which we are obliged to conceal and which thus come to form part of the “unconscious” (whose extraordinary power they share), and which, being not sought after, are therefore all the more genuine. Ingenious theory! We might answer that, on the contrary, the poet expresses the voice of his age; but to arguments like this it is always

possible to reply with others. The root of the error lies in failing to see the subject which is dealt with, in treating and 'penetrating' it always from an external standpoint, by shunning an intimate view, that is, a knowing *through identification* (cf. note 49).

If in dreams the desires—rejected by the consciousness of the waking state—need to disguise themselves and become almost irrerecognisable, in order that the waking consciousness may not rebel and that in some way they may actuate themselves; if this is not an occult fact but one which we may account for, it is not to be found in poetry or art. And if, as is pointed out, we find it in myths, in a given myth, we do not, however, find it in art, for which the myth is only the subject-matter. We do not find it as a fact belonging to the essence of art.

For there is an obvious error into which those fall who treat of art without having understood—at least in an explicit thought—its value. They fail to perceive that the value of a work of art does not essentially consist in the so-called subject. To read what Freud writes on the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, it would seem that the subject there unfolded ought to move an audience and have an artistic value by whomsoever chosen and developed! The value of art is *in rendering the material intelligible*, in making it a moment of truth, a moment of communion in the *eternal*.

Whatever in us has to be referred to remote experiences of men or beasts, to *specific* instincts, crudely bound to determined circumstances and stimuli¹: whatever is most obscure does not con-

¹ See p. 97, footnote.

stitute poetry ; the essence of poetry is intelligibility. Now it is the actual values of life which are intelligible ; they are primordial, but above all essential to activity, original, and in a certain sense eternal. And those crude instincts and remote experiences have to be approached and made intelligible by actual values and forms (*actual*, that is, present and active, realising themselves anew), by the perennial motives of love and desire, of terror also and of hunger. We must not suppose that they are truer or more profound, still less that they have a greater artistic value, if we catch them in forms that are less clear and apparently absurd, that is, which have no reason in the demand of being and of individuation, and in other forms and values to us intelligible, in us operative.

Every inclination of ours, every sentiment can be attributed to remote experiences, to primitive experiences of the individual, of the species or of the whole family of living things, and, on the other hand, to original and eternal values¹ ; nor would those experiences be conceivable without these values and forms, nor the latter without the former. But in as far as it is poetic vision, every passion of ours, made intensely free, is wholly actuality and intelligibility. Undoubtedly, our whole being is stirred, every fibre of it, and every ferocious instinct, every form of violence, and of blind self-seeking greed ; not less than every demand for renunciation or subordination of the particular and the individual : but only in a vigorous and luminous actuality, where every intuition is avidity of form and intelligibility *ex prin-*

¹ Cf. note 64.

cipio. It is not the material chosen nor the subject-matter, but the actuality or *activity* of thought, that is, the reality of thought, which makes poetry. Moreover, it is certainly not the best way to find this reality if we search for unknown strata of the psyche, strata unknown and "deep-seated" in the sense in which strata of the most distant geological epochs are deep-seated. Reality of thought is *activity* of thought, a present and original realisation, and it is not to be discovered through pursuing this false and one-sided concept of profundity. Thus the psycho-analytic painter who should search for monstrous phantoms in the darkest recesses of the psyche would not thereby banish—in the best sense, and as far as it is possible—external nature, nor thereby represent (as would be his pretension) the psyche, the activity of thought or psychic activity. He would do this no better than the artists who have imitated external nature. These indeed have represented the internal world and followed the latest doctrine in this connection when, in reproducing, for instance, the self-same Madonna over and over again, and always in the same attitude, they showed by their practice that they did not hold so much to anecdote nor aim at a badly understood object (the so-called "subject"), but rather were guided by the indwelling vision which is always new. Wherever there is native talent, there we find—whatever be the subject-matter—activity of thought, that is, reality of thought, the creative principle in its wealth, in its power and profundity. I do not wish to dilate on this point: I will only say that these truths escape those who consider the essence of art to consist in an

outburst of infancy, of the primitive, of the prehistoric, in a word, of the so-called "unconscious." Virginitv and innocence are qualities of the pure *form*, that is, of an eternal node of truths, which calls forth the past into life and renders it present, but which is not the past. And the "unconscious" (a monster who perceives even in sleep—if some one speaks to a sleeper; who is credulous, and wears a clumsy bungling expression, in dreams; in a certain aspect weak, in others formidable)—this "unconscious" does not explain and does not substitute the originality-necessity of the synthesis, of truth. That is, it does not explain and does not substitute the *actual*—a centre of subtle and powerful realities, in which the past is made transparent and which especially rejoice in the future, almost taking life from it, from the infinite of their own possibilities.

5.—Another false point of view leads to the same alleged connection, and this is the idea that poetry is something unreal and almost an illusion. On the contrary, a realistic exigency is the exigency, the content or poetic reality of all higher poetry. Thus the distinction between the practical and the poetic belongs to false poets, and is characteristic of a poor and mean way of thinking (which knows nothing of any profound subjectivity), as well as of a clumsy romanticism. For the poet, poetry is practical. It is his entire life. It is the will not to exclude, not to forget, but to gather up the real. To him

"Truth more than dreams is dear."¹

¹ A. C. Swinburne, *Poems and Ballads*, ii., *A Birth-Song*.

6.—It is alleged that poetry, specially on account of a certain prevalence in it of visual images, is a particular manifestation of the primitive life of peoples, and that therefore it must be connected with dreams, both because visual images prevail in the latter and because it is believed that dreams take us back to experiences of the childhood of the individual or of the species. It is hardly worth while remarking that it is by no means obvious that in the case of the so-called primitive peoples—and also in the case of the inferior animals most familiar to us—intelligence is to be found developed in the form of a lively fantastic activity, rather than as the rudimentary idea of a practical consequentiality, of a subordination of means to ends, of a quantitative or numerical relation, and of an arid and abstract ratiocination. This subordination of means to ends, according to a relatively arid and “voluntary” thought, is probably met with among savages just as with us, or even more so ; or the contrary has not been proved. Indeed it seems that a certain violence and arbitrariness and lack of grace are characteristic of men, but not of children in their earliest years, nor of the feathered tribes, nor of animals in general. And it appears that in our industrial civilisation a certain external, impoverished activity finds a fresh and profitable field, and that, as far as it prevails, every material becomes a miserable means or artifice, instead of bearing a delicate impress of life, and every value is relative to another and not original and real. But these are entirely secondary arguments, when we consider what poetic activity really is. It then appears that the onus of the proof lies with those who

would make of it a particular function howsoever limited and transient. Images are one with the essentially plastic nature of thought and life : they do not mark a return to primitive forms, but are in fact essential to thought, to its happy inexhaustible realisation. In periods of greater transformation and of higher creative capacity there will presumably be a more lively poetic activity, even in the forms of poetry (in a strict sense), but it is not permissible on this account to make of it a function peculiar to a given phase of development.—And with regard to all distinctions based upon the character of mental pictures or images—plastic, sonorous, discursive—that is, based upon the difference of the expressive material, only the worship of naturalistic laws can persuade us to build up rules on these distinctions and limitations, which are fragile and precarious, as compared with the full force of synthesis, or of the meaning : for there is no material which does not sometimes surprise us owing to the possibilities of its meaning ; neither is there any thought of vast and difficult content, the fruit of ripe reflection, which may not surprise us through a new simplicity of the means in which it finds expression.

It is true that Vico represents poetic activity as essentially belonging to the youth of peoples. But, in the first place, it is certainly not in this that the value of his doctrine is to be found, but rather in his having described poetry as an ultimate reality, as an original and eternal aspect or moment of mind. And perhaps, in accordance with Croce, we may consider that Vico's suggestion should not be taken literally, but as a symbolic means of indicating this reality, in

face of errors and *lacunae* which he intended to correct.

7.—W. H. R. Rivers differs widely from Freud and his disciples in many respects ; nevertheless he also associates art with dreams, and insists on the concept of a privileged resemblance between these two forms of activity. The fact is, however, that the arguments which he adduces are somewhat indeterminate, such as make no pretence, as it seems to me, of being exhaustive.¹ Among these arguments the one which is most conclusive is perhaps the following : “ . . . It is also possible,” he writes, “ at any rate in many cases, to show how these images [of the obvious content of a poem] are symbolic expressions of some conflict which is raging in the mind of the poet, and that the real underlying meaning or latent content of the poem is very different from that which the outward imagery would suggest.” There are charades, enigmas, parables in poetic form : but I imagine that Rivers does not refer to these evident instances, which occur but rarely. Moreover, in these cases, what is really poetry does not lie essentially in the fact that we are dealing with a charade or an enigma. Nor is it necessarily found in that which, in the enigma, charade or parable, is concealed or not explicitly expressed. Neither do I believe that Rivers refers to the “ hidden wisdom ” of words, since this is to be sought in the actual realising of thought, and is inseparable from the appearance, as the principle is from the act, and cannot be discovered behind or underneath the words, now more, now less in conformity with a spatial *schema*, accord-

¹ *Conflict and Dream*, 1923, p. 148.

ing as the psycho-analysts and in general the psychologists understand " profundity " in a material sense.

The psycho-analytic writers, as far as I know, do not deliberately consider, do not examine the concept of symbolic expression, of which they make continuous use. Yet it is a question worth discussion and close consideration, whether in dreams (even if we partly follow Freud's interpretation) we are really confronted with *symbolism*, which—if anything is meant by it—implies a distinct subject and a thought or concept having a reality distinct from the symbolic expression. But granting that in dreams the expression is merely symbolic, that is, a *means* in itself deprived of subjectivity and originality (a thing which is not proved and is anything but likely) ; or granting, with more likelihood, that in them the expression has only a slight originality and independent meaning of its own : admitting this, I repeat that precisely the contrary occurs in poetry. Nor do we understand why—assuming that an " unconscious " subject must manifest itself stealthily, or that, owing to an internal conflict, it finds no direct expression—this thought or this subject has to avail itself precisely of art and poetry, that is, of forms in which the mental presentments are more than anywhere else *moments of life*, ends in themselves, integral, full, dominant, harmonious, answering to every logical and ethical claim. A greater consistence is rather shown when it is pointed out by the same authors that the mental pictures, in which a definite hidden thought indirectly manifests itself, that is, the mental pictures of the apparent dream-texture, if considered

in themselves, and not *interpreted*, are insufficient, maimed, illusory, false.

8.—However, we may understand why to the “unconscious” are so readily attributed on the one hand poetry and more generally intuition, on the other hand dreams and chiefly psychoses, mental derangements, or, more exactly, certain forms of mental derangements. The “unconscious” is not so much a scientific or philosophic concept as a suggestive something, a myth that stands for a reality which we are not prepared to grasp in any other way and to know more adequately (or rather, it stands for many aspects of reality ; see note 48). And here in respect to poetry, certainly in some degree, the “unconscious” stands for the concept and the reality of an originality-necessity which is a reality that cannot be avoided and which we must take into account, even though we do not recognise it. Thus the “unconscious” is another name for what is commonly called inspiration, which term is more modest, and therefore, under a certain aspect, *less* true ; and it is a new name for the Muses. Yet it comes into being from an external and false point of view (see note 49), and is incomparably less near to the truth than the ancient name of the holy Virgins, who rightly wore the attributes of the eternal. For the concept of an originality-necessity was expressed, and indeed is still expressed and lives in their name ; thus there is in it, implicit or explicit, the concept of an activity which is not *absolutely* a derivation, and to whose being is essential a principle of consciousness (a principle of intuitive light, a principle of unity—or of as many aspects of the act

of consciousness taking shape or realising itself as we wish to remember, or distinguish).

9.—Rivers reminds us, moreover, that there have been cases in which people in sleep have composed poems or other works of art.¹ But since thought's activity is essentially the same in dreams and in the waking state (and this is the fundamental truth—which evidently does not offer in itself a good reason for particularly associating art and dreams), therefore, as I maintain, the cases to which Rivers refers prove nothing contrary to my contention. Perhaps they would prove something if we had to attribute to dreams, in any special way, the merit of important works of art, and contrariwise, if we could show that the waking state is an impotent one; but in general, as far as is known, the works of poetry and art which reach the highest order of excellence are not the products of dreams.

Certain compositions were created, and show every sign of having been so produced, in dreams, or under the influence of narcotics. One of Coleridge's most celebrated poems, *Kubla Khan*, has this appearance, and may be cited as an example. We admire in this work an intense reality of thought. Certain verses are compact and robust, a perpetual vortex of subtle harmonies, of kinships of meanings and sounds. The vision is full, clear-cut, concentrated. There is an almost palpable substance of thought. But do not these verses recall, even if only distantly, a dense, turgid vision, in which the substance of thought is too thick and too material to reach the height of free art? There is lacking in these verses, as it seems

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

to me, a certain openness and light, a transformation or elevation into a clearer and more transparent thought, a serene and dominating vision, which cannot exist except through the presence of a vaster responsibility, of a watchful love. Therefore that which apparently might or ought to be attributed to the particular dream-condition, or to a similar one, is nowise to be adduced as an element of poetic perfection, and does not bring to the poet's vision the proper value of art. This, however, does not exclude the possibility of the most beautiful visions sometimes lighting up our dreams : it only shows that the originality and real character of art are not *especially* to be sought in the dream state.

10.—When we consider and recognise as the most probable hypothesis an originality and—therefore—a logical value diffused all through the “dreaming clay,” in so far as it is psyche : when we come to this concept, or if we do not lose sight of it, certain ingenious, flattering theses appear strange, awkward, useless, and quite arbitrary, instead of being luminous. I refer principally to the following : the conceiving of the mental pictures belonging to the apparent dream-texture as not having a meaning or *raison d'être* of their own (the failure to inquire, for instance, if in place of a symbol it is not possible in a given case to discern a peculiar development of some thought, demand, sentiment, desire, in unusual forms) ; the regarding the so-called “censor” as an entity detached from those mental presentments ; the attributing to the “unconscious” the necessary, essential cause of dreams ; the assertion that this cause is of quite a different nature from that of the



psyche—of that psyche of which we may have some knowledge and to which the act of taking shape or form is essential; the making it into a monster alleged to be “a-moral,” “a-logical”; and above all, the raising of a given formation to the dignity of a law or constant type. For it is not here a question of classifying, but of understanding. In this subject we must not seek for laws in a naturalistic sense, but for intelligible modes of being; not mere universals of fact; not formations which an occult necessity always presents according to a type, corresponding to an inevitable law, but reasons, whose essence, in the first place, is that they realise themselves according to a vocation or effort, whose measure is not given, and that they may exist now more, now less. We are indeed here face to face with facts of consciousness—a reality which in the first place we must know through ‘identification’ and therefore certainly not by excluding a priori, in what we wish to understand, an originality, an intelligence. And we should not find any interpretation of the facts of consciousness which would not reflect the want of this notion (except that in a concrete case, in a living thought, such deficiency is corrected);—I mean the notion of an originality not bereft of character or of inward truth, the notion of an intelligence which is synonymous with life, a principle of *essential* identification, omnipresent wherever there is activity; constant, and at the same time, through its very nature, constantly new and different. Nearly every interpretation of facts of consciousness carried out in the absence of this concept (which, however, has no need to be learned; it is essentially a plain and simple principle of in-

terpretation offered by common sense) appears, when viewed in its light, fictitious, secretly longing for the occult or the idol, far-fetched, and above all rigid and fragile.

11.—The comparison between poetry and dreams, in order to emphasise a similarity of nature between the two, is justified, as I said, at first sight : if for the first time, in dreams, with new and great astonishment, we come upon a reality which does not consist of things belonging to the external world. Therefore, and from this point of view, we may truly say with Shakespeare : “. . . we are such stuff as dreams are made of.” And to point out that art is this reality—and is not, for instance, a simple imitation of nature—and that there is in it a knot and a development of original truths which no effort of will, no ability, wisdom, initiative or daring can substitute : in this sense the rapprochement between poetry and dreams may be justified. It is to this moderate conception that F. C. Prescott generally holds in the volume to which I have alluded above (see note 46). But on further consideration, when we see that activity (originality) of thought is not only to be found in dreams, and that they in fact do not presumably constitute the place where it is most developed, nor certainly the place where it may best be recognised : when, in addition, we see how and to what extent this concept has been misused, the connection between the two must either be wholly avoided, or considered as secondary and, relatively, irrelevant.

And the comparison does not hold, especially in dealing with the type of dreams described by Freud,

and according to his interpretation (see § 2). Yet for the reasons which I have hinted at (see § 10), I hold that it is permissible even to-day to refer—if it is desired to pursue this comparison—to another type of dreams, that is, to the dream as it is commonly conceived, such as, for instance, is described by Leopardi (“Il Sogno”), and by Petrarca (“Quando il soave mio fido conforto”; “Levommi il mio pensier in parte ov’era”). Now as regards these dreams, the problem undoubtedly presents itself (a problem which I do not propose to solve), whether and in what measure the beauty of poetry, that is, poetry, is due to the dream or to the waking state; and whether or not the dream state is capable of so much loftiness and serenity.

It certainly appears to me that, for instance, a vision and a truth, of such a kind as that through which, at the approach of the crisis of his malady, the “Idiot,” of whom Dostoievski tells us, saw life *as prayer and as beauty*, would overstrain and break the texture of a dream.

From a less partial view, we must remember that art represents in human history moments of the greatest *illumination* and *concentration*.

Freud does not admit that in dreams the psychic activity is weakened or in any way *inferior*. Nevertheless, certain characteristics of dreams—and especially those which he himself points out—seem to indicate, in many respects at least, a certain psychic disintegration or decomposition, a certain impotence of synthesis: thus we find a certain one-sidedness in relation to morality, and this is also the case if we consider the mode of expression. With regard to the

latter (to sum up what I have said), we find, as it were, a supine acquiescence in the material available, a taking advantage of the material at our disposal, without the need or the power of transforming, of widely remaking it. Or we detect the impress or indication of several conflicting thoughts (cf. Rivers's theory): none of which, as it seems, is capable of gathering up the whole into unity and truth. We must also remember the hallucinatory character of dream-pictures, and also the fact that in dreams examples of lucid recollection of far-distant events are frequently met with—for this is memory as a mere retentive power, not memory which is intelligence in an intense degree, and implies interpretation and transformation (as in art).—Above all, thought in dreams stops at limits which would be intolerable in the waking state; while, on the other hand, there is no *why*, there is no objection—rendered possible according to the circumstances and the state of culture of a given time and place—to which implicitly or explicitly the verse does not respond, in a plain and simple way. The fable, too, implicitly and harmoniously responds to every *why*. We find a very different exigency of truth, vigour of analysis and objectivity in the spontaneity of poetic thought (unlike that generally occurring in dreams): in contrasts and conciliations of *higher* value. The view which upholds an inferiority of thought in dreams in general is discarded too hastily—partly in homage to the divinity of the “unconscious,” and partly because the concept of inferiority or superiority, in that it implies value, seems to lack scientific character.

The so-called "unconscious" in the doctrine and according to the language of psycho-analysis conceals and at the same time indicates various genuine problems. It is to this that the popularity of the "unconscious" and under certain aspects its *raison d'être* must be ascribed, because this term "unconscious," unlike its rival "subconscious," lends itself to the formation of what is almost a myth. The following are the aspects of reality, which, in my opinion, are concealed, and partly disfigured, but at the same time confirmed, by this fictitious conception.

(1) The "subconscious," that is, the relatively unconscious, that which is unconscious as regards our most wakeful consciousness.

(2) The physiological conditions.

(3) The originality or spontaneity of thought, as opposed to an intentional thought, to that which we think with conscious effort.

(4) A reality of principles; that is, the very originality of thought or of psychic activity, in its value of an intimate non-arbitrariness; the *intrinsicity* or *eternity* of thought in its values and forms.

(5) The unknown in general.

(1) It is constantly asserted, and most strongly emphasised, that the "unconscious" is of a nature quite different to that of consciousness, that it has a logic of its own, totally unlike the logic of the waking state. This position is due to the very superficial idea entertained of logic, as well as of consciousness (cf. note 49). Yet, while an absolute difference of

nature between the conscious and the "unconscious" is asserted, on the other hand the "unconscious states" are always represented in terms of consciousness, that is, as acts, desires, and things that have a meaning.

Also the fundamental assumption of psycho-analytical practice, according to which remote and morbid groupings of thought may be cured, when they are recalled and taken up into the normal consciousness—when they are traced again to their primitive formation, and also by our illuminating and softening the resistance of consciousness—this fundamental assumption would seem to set up a presumption against the thesis that consciousness and the "unconscious" differ entirely in their nature, as well as against the hypothesis of a consciousness whose only function would be that of registration. So that, from the standpoint of psycho-analytical text-books, we do not see why the term "unconscious" is used instead of "subconscious," and why it is not sought to avoid offering an offence to language (if to nothing else), by speaking of "unconscious representations."¹

¹ We sometimes find that the word "unconscious" is used in a similar manner by students of Psychic Science. Yet the subconscious and, more generally speaking, the supernormal or preternormal powers which are dealt with in Psychic Science seem to be synthetic and plastic, intelligent or purposive (about this there is no question). Therefore it would be hard to assume that consciousness, in its widest and most essential meaning, is not a necessary attribute to them. In fact, there is a tendency to renounce, to disown thought and consciousness—in this case not for blind matter or energy, but for something superior to psychic reality. Yet those preternormal powers, as far as I can see, do not appear to be of a nature foreign to thought, and the contrary view perhaps depends on a shallow idea of thought (or consciousness) as regards its intrinsic modes, its nature. I still believe that thought is a partaker and a testimony of a universal

(2) The problem is not stated (as far as I know) if by the "unconscious" we are to understand an activity which persists in a given content, a centre and organisation of life, having its own proper continuity, or on the other hand the presumable physiological conditions or 'traces' of psychic activity, which persist—just as the material of a painting persists, though no one looks at it. The character of indestructibility which is said to be the peculiar attribute "of all really unconscious psychical states,"¹ seems to point to a lower grade of intensity and continuity of life in the "unconscious," as existing only as *past*, under the form of *conditions*. It is, in fact, a common observation that the recollections and in general the presentments to which we most frequently return, and to which we devote our chief activity and thought, are the most liable to transformation; and it seems that *quality* must tend to modify its conditions instead of only repeating them untouched or clenching them. In this respect the study of the so-called unconscious may perhaps yield interesting results for human history, by bringing us back to experiences overpast²: whether the latter be resuscitated from their conditions or traces

principle and not an extravagance, hardly connected with reality, or a cluster of illusions, as it were, in the hands of overwhelming powers. We are engaged in a tremendous, if not desperate, *struggle for intelligibility*—in which the significance of philosophy consists; and it seems to me strange how willingly and how loosely we represent our thought as if it were peculiar to a given form of life, or merely relative, and impotent, as regards knowledge and truth. We should rather try to gain a less partial notion with regard to the nature of thought.

¹ Sigm. Freud, *Die Traumdeutung*, 7th ed., 1922, p. 412 and pp. 428-429.

² Cf. W. H. R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious*, 2nd ed., 1924.

—these alone being transmitted and preserved ; or whether these experiences may have been lived over again unceasingly or more continuously, and thus may have had a life of their own, and a development independently of our consciousness of the waking state.

Some obscure idea of the psyche, the being able to discern psychical entities which persist as psychical though without being *activity* (see note 56), may perhaps in part account for this excessive simplification, through which the “unconscious” includes indifferently something *active* (a psychic activity distinct from ours ; that is, one or more lives, distinct from the one of which we are actually conscious), and on the other hand the presumable *conditions* of activity, not necessarily gathered up into a centre or synthesis of their own, and similar to the innumerable conditions of our recollections and cognitions, about which at a given moment we do not think—but which nevertheless we do not believe we ought to call “unconscious,” and do not refer to an “unconscious.”

(3) Freud remarks that in witticism the ideas appear to be unsought—a thing which points to an “unconscious” origin.¹ In general it seems that to the “unconscious” is ascribed all that is not *willed*, or intentionally thought. People do not reflect that, strictly speaking, thought is always original ; that not even *arbitrium* can be attributed to *arbitrium* (by which I do not mean that it is deterministically derivable, predetermined, imposed): *that even abstract reason implies an objectivity, a non-particular, a non-ephemeral, which can neither be*

¹ *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, 3rd ed., 1921, p. 145.

substituted nor imitated. If consciousness is limited to what one wishes to say, or to that of which we are most conscious, and which, intentionally, voluntarily, is done or thought, then consciousness is reduced to a fiction, and no one in whom life is not wholly dark would accept such a use of the word. We do not form a single word or accent *voluntarily*; and just as we find involuntarily (not unconsciously) words to express ourselves, so involuntarily—not through habit or mechanism, but originally—we express truth, or, to speak more precisely, truth (which is the active subject) expresses itself.

And we must conceive of this originality as diffused everywhere where there is psyche, and it is a mistake to oppose it to consciousness; and even the term “subconscious” would be generally adopted improperly and in a forced sense, so great is the continuity and unity between our explicit consciousness and other moments of one and the same intelligence which is always original and independent. The consciousness of which we are aware melts away in an immense mass of memories, of cognitions, and of *conditions* in which there is still activity and actual synthesis. If this were not so, a thought would be as if lost in the dark, isolated and incapable of extension and development, save through blind attempts or external circumstances and chances: just like one who, standing in front of a single picture, and desirous of selecting others to harmonise with it, yet neither sees nor remembers them. But if the other pictures are at hand, or if he remembers them, not as mere material, but *in principio* as pictures, then the choice can be made.

If any one speaks of the "unconscious"—under this, if not under other aspects—he is unaware that the spontaneous formation which he calls "unconscious" is not a particular case, but is proper and essential to thought. The psyche is always a welling up of founts innumerable, a forming of thoughts and words or other expressive signs, which, if on the one hand they constitute a unity having a single centre, have also a *raison d'être* peculiar to themselves: they are so many individuations, each of them a consciousness, some more, some less in the shade—with regard to our most vigilant thought: one identifies itself with it, or rather is that thought itself; another is unreachable, brings its own light with it: for a moment I feel that it is a beautiful thought, a little self-contained truth, like a tiny pearly sphere, all harmony, a truth that has soul and body, intelligible because it renews the spiritual reality, it is this reality, that is, a node of truths, a unity of characterising values and forms. But if I am not alert, it escapes me, and I find it no more: especially in the half-waking state there happens (and this has frequently been noted by the psycho-analysts) an experience I have myself undergone; namely, the fact that one of these lucid spheres more than once returned to my mind, but always in vain. A detached and living consciousness, which my *arbitrium*, my will with full intention could not seize! But thought is always a phaenomenon of this kind: only this dualism tends to reduce itself to zero when, in the act of thinking, we do not exercise our arbitrary will and our efforts in seeking out and recalling a thought and rousing it to a more perfect form and

new developments, or when, on the other hand, in a thought theoretically poor, everything is constructive will, extrinsic action.

A conspicuous form of this mistake is found when we read that intuitions, "especially if they savour of genius," can or must be attributed to the "unconscious" or to dissociated forms of life.¹ Then why not goodness? at least in cases of special excellence, where we feel most surprise? Why not wickedness? Why not everything that cannot be reconstructed at will and by our patient ingenuity alone? The wish to refer everything to something else and the inability or unwillingness to consider any actual value, any real and present cause; as well as the want of all conception of activity as originality, in other words, as *liberty*, which is at the same time *internal necessity*, a non-arbitrary character of values and forms:—these are the causes of this false point of view. Liberty is not understood except as *arbitrium*, caprice or chance; and inasmuch as the latter are, and must be, excluded, nothing is left but to embrace a "psychological determinism," which means *a referring to something else* (especially to the "unconscious"). There is no suspicion of an originality which is neither chance nor mere *arbitrium* because it is character, because it has an internal necessity or character;—an originality which is not wholly derivable and predetermined; and which *has its cause in its self-formation as consciousness*. "Liberty," I repeat, is considered as synonymous with "chance" (and with "*arbitrium*"): "There are no free presentments, that is, we never think of a

¹ Cf. W. Mackenzie, *Metapsichica moderna*, 1923, pp. 167, 350.

name or a number by chance.”¹ But have not the philosophers also given to liberty the name of *contingency*?

Now, in accordance with such a conception, either it would be right to regard intuition (thought) as chance (or, in some way, caprice, *arbitrium*), or it must be entirely derivable from something else. (Hence recourse is had to the “unconscious,” which nevertheless represents perhaps some progress as compared with other mechanical theories.)

(4) Those who look for the origin and essence of the present modes of thought in those forms which are infantile, primitive, as well as bestial or obscene, are affected also by the sense of a profound lacuna existing between a meagre reason which lacks all internal necessity (as they, and others, regard reason and thought) and the reality of consciousness itself and of life. And if, on the other hand, they wish to fill up this lacuna by means of merely mechanical conceptions, this intention on their part does not wholly express their thought. Also their belief in being able to refer to primitive forms and to the so-called unconscious the most profound and subtle intuitions, and particularly the revelations of science and art—this belief of theirs is not always or only explained by an ambition to derive the most evolved forms from the simpler, to resolve them into the latter and deny *value* in general. It seems to me indeed that we find in this suggestive term “unconscious” the recognition, as well as the want of

¹ I take these words from a critic of Freud's doctrine; but they are in fact conformable to the language of the psychoanalysts (and of others as well). See Ch. Blondel, *La Psychanalyse*, 1924, p. 34.

recognition or the disfigurement, of a power which overrides individual constructions, however inborn in individuals and not existing outside them, and which is not wholly mechanical. The very terms "depth" and "deep" which so often recur, if understood in a purely material sense, would have no meaning, or would not have the meaning which is obviously attached to them ; were it not that they imply, though vaguely, the idea of an intimate character, which has its value from being really a *principle*, and not only an element given, a 'form formed.'

The constancy of principles, to some extent recognised or dimly discerned, is called by some philosophers "habit," by others "apriority" ; and by these psychiatrists it is hinted at or substituted by the term "unconscious." It is difficult to say which of these terms is the most inadequate or equivocal. "Habit" points at mechanism ; "apriority" leads one to think of principles as distinct from the content of experience. Lastly, the "unconscious," amid its other shortcomings, only invites us to look for new facts, not to deepen the conception of activity or of the psyche.

(5) Those intent on explaining the known by the unknown (by the "unconscious") forget that the problem of the unknown is unsolved. At the same time the fascination of the unknown exerts its sway over them. They also find satisfaction in asserting our common ignorance, thus humiliating themselves and others, yet in fact saving their own pride by this very assertion.

49

The *becoming conscious* is the moment which more than anything else deserves consideration: otherwise we fail to use the sole access at our disposal for discovering activity, the psyche, life, that which in the psyche (to use the psychologists' own expression) is more "dynamic."

Let me say again: the becoming conscious—that is, consciousness forming or realising itself—is the most favourable moment for investigating the nature of psychic activity. Moreover: synthesis (*qua* consciousness) is the point where philosophy yields most fruit.

But the psycho-analysts regard consciousness as a *fact*, not as an *act*. Hence they are satisfied in considering a presentment as a fact: they do not ask whether for a presentment its making be not an essential part of its being, and whether in this its making there be not a value, that is, a principle of consciousness, essential to it. Hence Freud finds it easy to assert: "Qu'elle soit consciente ou inconsciente, une représentation reste toujours la même, à une seule différence près, et nous pouvons très bien dire ce qui correspond à une représentation inconsciente."¹ (And not because a reference may be made to a 'relatively unconscious,' to an unconscious relative to our consciousness, at a given moment.) Thus he is able to conceive of consciousness as "a sensory organ for the perception of psychic qualities," the latter being in themselves entirely unconscious.²

¹ *Introduction à la Psychanalyse*, transl., 1923, p. 438.

² *Die Traumdeutung*, ed. cit., p. 454; cf. p. 101.

And the use of the term "unconscious" (referring to activity, and in its literal sense) strikes us as being the sign of a certain inferiority, a kind of barbarism, in psychological and "metapsychological" studies, precisely because, outside an intimate study of consciousness, there remains nothing but suppositions, and one goes on conjecturing, without any criticism, about an energy, a force of inertia, an x ; and because solely in that self-forming which is consciousness may be known the psychic activity as an active principle, and the meaning of quality or value. Nor is the question here only one of error, but it involves a profound orientation of a 'constructive' and external thought (see note 50).

Freud sums up his position in connection with the above considerations in the following definition: "The true psychical reality (das eigentlich reale Psychische, the "unconscious") is just as unknown to us, in its inner nature, as is the reality of the external world, and is just as imperfectly reported to us through the data of consciousness as the external world through the testimony of the sensory organs."¹

Only this proposition of Freud is hardly worse, unfortunately, than another proposition with which it must be connected, namely that of Windelband, who nevertheless speaks in the name of philosophy (see note 88).

50

There are some who are unpretending in their thoughts and speak only of things that they truly

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 452.

possess and live through in their minds, and when they philosophise about qualities and feelings, especially in representing concrete cases, they naturally stop to consider quality and value, and naturally see in the latter a reason and a principle. In consequence they do not fall into certain errors. Whereas the false theorists, endowed as they are with a generalising and practical intellect, who are blind to what is nearest, and always intent on looking for extrinsic reasons, their minds fixed on the reasons of a ruthless determinism, which ascribes everything to something else—these are they who are infected with a certain mania for deriving everything and who admit the most preposterous causations. But the mania for derivation, and the unwillingness or inability to consider *the actual* (the present, intrinsic cause), has perhaps never raged so much as among the modern psycho-analysts. I will give only a few instances.

The habit of thrift is said to arise from particular erotic predilections of childhood.¹ It is here sufficient to remember that thrift is connected with a certain conservative spirit, with the desire to make everything serve something else indeterminately, with a search for things that last, with a certain utilitarianism, with a certain responsibility (even though within the limits of an exclusive individual interest), that is, with a spirit of abstract transcendence, and therefore with profound spiritual attitudes, in which it is intelligible to us, in which it has its reason and its explanation (cf. note 57). Again, the

¹ Freud, *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie*, 4th ed., 1920, p. 100.

he's no p!

avoidance of problem of value

spirit of rebellion, for instance, against constituted authority, against social conventions, is said to be due to the "Oedipus-complex," being "the expression of an infantile revolt against the parent."¹ Brotherhood, devotion, and all the so-called social sentiments spring, it is maintained, from homosexuality, and this through the so-called phenomenon of "sublimation." As to this concept of "sublimation," it seems to be adopted as a makeshift, and means little, and could not mean much, so long as one is bent on seeking to *derive* everything. But if we consider this term "sublimation" attentively, we discover in it a problem, in the first place, and then an originality, a present reality, that principle and those principles which we look for in vain in the *forms formed and accumulated* (in so far as they are such). Again, the ridiculous springs, we are told, from a supposed quantitative correlative, from "an economy in the outlay of psychical energy."² Here we may ask how the extraordinary value of the ridiculous is explained, once a man, as Freud himself says, is disarmed in face of the ridiculous, and since, on the other hand, it is probable that, at every moment and in different ways, similar and greater economies may be, and are, produced (see note 52).

I should not set forth these errors were they not almost caricatures of common mistakes. The blindest materialism is still dominant even among persons of *culture*, even in Italy, and it is useless to harbour illusions. We have to do with common errors and

¹ S. Herbert, *The Unconscious Mind*, 1923, p. 135.

² Freud, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, ed. cit., vii.

attitudes due to *the non-recognition of an actual reality and to the avoidance of the problem of value*. We hear, for instance, of a fluid or of vibrations in the case of love or of sympathy wherein, *ex parte materiae*, only the *conditions* of love might be recognised. And, given the way in which this subject is treated, and the interest shown in it, evidently no attention is paid to the fact that if this love-fluid be regarded romantically and somewhat like a stellar mystery, the problem and value of love are found again untouched in this new form. But if it is really a current, or a juice (let us say, a gastric juice), or a chemical reaction, then, if we are serious in deriving love from any of these things, its value is either excluded, or not explained nor truly derived from them. Some observe that with children everything is imitation. It would be useless to tell them that they do not know children, that babies greatly vary in their preferences, that imitation does not exclude choice and implies consent and judgment. They would not listen. Of all the forms of activity imitation is the one which most recalls the force of inertia, the transference of a movement from one body to another, as we represent it. Hence the fortune which has attended this word : it denies originality and explains (?) value. Again, some, and these with a larger following, derive one form or example of art from another, and the disproportionate interest which they feel in such derivations shows that they are thinking of something very different from the reality of the work of art, which latter is actuality of thought, an originality full of intrinsic necessity or eternity, and with regard to which the distance between master and pupil,

between master and imitator, is often so much greater than the distance between artists far removed from each other in space or time.

But the inadequacy and false conclusions of certain doctrines are most clearly seen in the problem of art. The author of a manual on psycho-analysis, after having stated that "the symbol reveals, and yet conceals," and that in this fact lies its great charm and attraction,¹ sums up his position by quoting the following passage from another psycho-analyst: "The liberating effect of art is due to the fact that it allows man to work off freely his emotion in the artistic image, while at the same time he is able to hide himself behind it."² Generally, in aesthetic theories which seek to explain a distinct "aesthetic pleasure" as due to particular gratifications, compensations, adaptations of energy, which finds at last its outlet or its equilibrium, or as due to poor satisfactions of the will, art and its value are lost sight of. The same theories might equally well avail to define the poorest satisfactions gained at card-playing, and from the standpoint of these theories it is impossible to understand how one distinguishes, or should wish to distinguish, the relief or the pleasure of sitting down from the admiration which we feel for what is great and beautiful. The use of symbolic and veiled language may give satisfaction, but it hardly reveals the reality and the value of thought as a transparent essence, as an intimate reason, as an infinite and actual origin, as a creative principle, which at every moment weaves a web that is not ephemeral, at every

¹ S. Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

² *Cit.* J. Landquist in *Imago*, vol. vi., No. 4, p. 302.

moment renews light and darkness, and reminds us of its kinship with the Kosmos. Lastly, to give an extreme instance. The celebrated C. G. Jung, in his chief work, remarks that "the pleasure felt in a tragedy is due to the terrible yet welcome feeling that what was threatening us has befallen another."¹ The value and justification of tragedy lie chiefly in the fact that *tragedy* is a moment of profound intimacy, a moment of truth, a moment of communion with all men (for these concepts are *essentially* but one). As it reaches its highest beauty and intensity, tragedy reveals the heart of man as *true*, truer than any abstract doctrine, more than any idol, more than any *utility*. Similarly in human history, under the stress of events, in critical hours, the truth of a more profound and genuine humanity is revealed, fictitious or trifling values fall to the ground, and an unexpected purification renews and raises the masses and the parliaments, hitherto misled or corrupt. Only in tragedy, being a form of art, the transparency or the glory of thought, that is, its infinite and original reality, is somewhat more visible. The moment is there considered in itself and for itself, and therefore is in a certain sense more lingered over and contemplated. But its significance is nevertheless the same: a moment of truth, which is also a moment of communion, and of eternity. The ultrapsychologist has of course no belief in these conceptions. He does not enter into the problem of value (which is foreign to what he believes to be science). Otherwise he

¹ *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, Jahrbuch für psychoanalytische und psychopathologische Forschungen, III. Band, 1. Hälfte, p. 154,

would note the difference between the pleasure he feels on escaping a disaster and that caused by reading or listening to a tragedy. Also he would ask himself why, according to his conception, the best spectator and critic should not be, *caeteris paribus*, the man who is vilest and most cruel. In this explanation of the value of tragedy—as the unconscious satisfaction for one's own safety—we shun once more the motive which is recognisable, profoundly, intimately intelligible, and preference is given to an explanation which is crass, gratuitous, and hypothetical, and which is unable to give, in the concrete case, the reason and the manner of a given internal change.

We do not see any effort to reach towards the knowledge, the intimate knowledge, of an interior finality. The concept of that which is *formation*, as opposed to that which is *extrinsic construction*, is never considered. And here I am not speaking only of the psycho-analysts: I include also the biologists of the vitalist school, or at least their leader Driesch, who nevertheless is always talking about an "entelechy." Nor is there any trace of these problems to be found in those passages where Freud expressly deals with the theory of pleasure.¹ In fact, I have been unable to find in these authors any direct contribution to an introspective view. On the other hand, it is a radical mistake to suppose that the external biological view can for a moment be separated from the introspective philosophical standpoint.

The psyche, or the "psychical," is not recognised

¹ *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, 2nd ed., 1921; cf. *Der Witz*, etc., ed. cit., p. 80.

except in a *substratum of mere existents* (and this is perhaps also the most common view : not only among those who in order to know the psyche think that they must overpass it). It is not perceived that the mere quantitative view cannot grasp the making or realising of synthesis, the quality or value.

There is everywhere almost a desire to dismiss, to reject, to refuse to see the *actual* : that is, quality, value, beauty, which is *actual* reality (activity as present origin, and, therefore, as an internal necessity, and as eternity in the act).

But this is a profound spiritual attitude. Hence I am perhaps justified in having collected errors of this kind. Beauty wishes not, or to use the word of deepest meaning, loves not, to be looked at. Nature seems to compel us not to linger too much in the actual, in the contemplation of infinite thought, of its song, of its glory, and even of its stubborn faith. And he who intended to bring to men, in place of conventions, presumptions, prejudices, and dead forms, a true and great reality, which is beauty, and truth, and love, was not loved : he was lonely, he was cursed, he was slain. Knowledge incurs no slight hatred, if it be an intimate knowledge and not chiefly construction ; and although sometimes later generations do homage to its more fortunate lovers, inasmuch as its gold alone makes possible all the varied base alloys, nevertheless the conservative majority, intent on the things ' that serve for something else ' and on the things that endure, through a deep-seated hatred, indeed, through an ingrained instinct or vocation, is openly or secretly hostile to it.

51

I now turn to consider William M'Dougall's volume entitled *An Outline of Psychology*¹: and here we undoubtedly reach a distinctly higher level, if only with regard to theory. M'Dougall is an able psychologist, and certainly opposed to extreme views. He investigates with minute care and challenges the mechanical theories which apparently are in vogue to-day in America, such as *tropism* and *behaviourism*. He defends the concept of a finality ("purposiveness") in the activity of thought. Yet the notion of an originality and of an intimate finality (or value) of thought is clearly wanting even in this volume, and this deficiency leads to consequences philosophically and scientifically false.

52

(Page 168.) The necessity or the desirableness of saving ourselves from suffering when, in a certain sense, the suffering would be useless, in cases of minor importance, is the cause and the explanation of laughter. Nature endowed man with a certain tendency and aptitude for laughter at the sight of trifling misfortunes of his fellows, and this, to save him from too frequent and useless tears or compassion. This teleological explanation undoubtedly offers something more refined, when compared with the explanation resting on a base purely and absolutely quantitative, such as we find in Spencer and which Freud takes up and elaborates. (According to their doctrine, laughter is caused by a "surplus"

¹ Methuen, London, 1923.

and by a discharge of energy under given conditions.) But a teleological explanation, thus understood, which rests on an external finality, on an extrinsic end, in the first place, does not explain—nor could it ever do so, in my opinion—the nature (the essence, the reality) of laughter.

The cause of laughter lies in the nature or essence of the spiritual or psychic activity—not in an extrinsic end, nor in a physiological jest ; and it is no less profound and far-reaching than the cause and reason of tears. The above interpretation, and many others, arise from dealing with a matter which we do not know (intimately) and, what is worse, avoid knowing (see note 50). We laugh when we are released from profound logical and ethical exigencies, or from any unquestioned necessities and expectations (which form the basis and limit of our practical and theoretical activity), and in that freedom of ours we know or catch a glimpse of the heaviness and lightness of life. And this is a characteristic of laughter which, far from being negligible, is essential to it. Only this 'being released' must not be absolute ; it requires circumstances and delicate limits : for of course it is clear that otherwise the same explanation might hold good not only for laughter or for smiles, or for irony, or sophistry, but also for every kind of scepticism and cynicism, and for crime ; as well as for fables, and dreams.—Synthesis or liberty, or the realisation of activity, easily reached under given conditions, and especially by passing on to subjective, and intrinsic, exigencies of activity—this is the cause and the reality of laughter : that is, the new and easy liberty, and in accordance

with limits and shadings which it would be a mistake to presume to condense into a formula. The secret of laughter lies in the mode of the relation between two aspects or moments of our liberty—two liberties, two realities, almost two worlds—which persist together. But this and other kindred truths, which are not less simple, are not understood, indeed no attention is paid to their value, and search is made elsewhere. Search is made and will continue to be made elsewhere, *until words like synthesis, liberty, activity are taken seriously.*

M'Dougall quotes Nietzsche to support or confirm his thesis : man " suffers so deeply that he had to invent laughter." But this truth does not establish his thesis. For if our nature cannot follow to its utmost limit what is horrible, but frees itself from it and turns to laughter, *the cause of the latter* (that is, its true essence and moving principle) *is not the horror, but the new and strange liberty.* It is not the horror, nor the end or the necessity of saving ourselves from suffering : and this not only because, for the attainment of this object, other means perhaps presented themselves, but because the end of saving ourselves from suffering, or of saving ourselves absolutely, cannot have constituted the reality of the act of laughing. We must therefore, I repeat, take the word *liberty* (act, synthesis) seriously ; and, on the other hand, not confuse conditions with causes. The soul's real texture cannot be explained by a mechanical theory, nor by a concept abstractly teleological in accordance with an extrinsic finality. It is this new and peculiar liberty—not the necessity of avoiding overwhelming suffering—that is the

essential constitutive cause of laughter. And let me add that apparently laughter may also occur outside this necessity, or this end, but there can be no laughter without this liberty.

Perhaps M'Dougall would rejoin with Rivers that "factors universal in mankind cannot be regarded as the essential causes."¹ This is no secondary or accidental aspect of the same attitude, indeed of the same error, to which I have more than once drawn attention. The statement quoted above would be true in a purely mechanical world, where causes and conditions are one and the same thing, or may be considered as such, and much depends on convention. Or again, it would also be justified if this cause, that is, activity—as truth or intrinsicality of values and forms, and as a *value of realisation*—were not also the cause of diversity or specification, of the unique individuality of the act.² But as matters stand, whoever has gained a deeper insight into activity cannot but describe it as properly the cause.

53

(Page 171.) "Play is activity for its own sake, or, more properly, it is a purposeless activity, striving toward no goal." Up to this point the concept of an activity, or of an actuating, which is a *value*, and a finality not necessarily extrinsic—this concept is not negatived, in fact the words quoted might be regarded as recognising it expressly or implicitly. But the author adds: "Whence, then, comes the energy that sustains the play?" As though this power of

¹ W. H. R. Rivers, *Conflict and Dream*, 1923, p. 144.

² Cf. *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 46, 47.

moving and of sustaining a given activity belonged properly and exclusively to an extrinsic end—such as generally obtains in other cases, but not in play. As though, and this is the worst mistake, there were no finality except in an extrinsic end.

The author replies to this question as follows (for, according to him, we must exclude an *intention* in play and an explanation based on such intention): “The answer is, I think, that the well-fed and well-rested animal, especially the young animal, has a surplus of nervous energy which works through the channels of the various motor mechanisms.” Now we must bear in mind that not the worst, but the best, psychologists have arrived at interpretations of a similar kind, of which the one to which I have referred is an example. For Guyau himself apparently represents, for instance, charity as a symptom of surplus energy.¹

Yet we are confronted with characters, modes and values which are essential to activity—for instance, charity: the losing of our exclusive individuality in the consciousness of activity as a *principle*; or play, as activity under a certain aspect disinterested, not utilitarian or ‘transcendent.’ We are confronted with characters, modes and values which certainly are not derived from, do not owe their cause to, activity being increased in its volume or in its energy of movement, and which cannot in principle be excluded from activity, not even from its most meagre or scanty forms: any more than synthesis, for instance, can be excluded from it. Undoubtedly we shall find a quality or value of activity much more

¹ Cf. *Principii di etica*, § 29.

actual and evident when life is more intense, in its renewal and growth (e.g. curiosity, generosity, courage are more usually connected with youth than with mature age): nevertheless it may be recognised as intense and powerful *even in the faintest breath of life*. When an old man is verging towards his end, may he not be more than ever inclined, although his strength be failing, to benevolence, to kindly jests, to play? May he not then be wonderfully charitable, upright, and generous, released from his personal interests, and from all narrow-mindedness? It may be objected that, just because he is released from such interests, he has a "surplus" of energy to expend in this fashion. For certain truths are not proved by small arguments, by adducing new data, which can always lend themselves to different interpretations. It is needful to gain consciousness of a kinship of truths, whose lucid life does not allow of being stifled by interpretations which, while having no real knowledge of it, derive it—abstractly conceived or supposed—and transfer it to *inert* and hypothetical elements.

Where there is a quality or value, which *is* in the effort or in the vocation of realising itself: which exists in so far as, and because it realises itself; whose realisation is an intrinsic end and a motive-power; there these psychologists see the "surplus" or exuberance of energy in a well-fed man: a "surplus" of life in a sense purely quantitative. Hence we see clearly from the passages above quoted what is the meaning and what is the consequence of conceiving an energy, which is a force of inertia, a mass which is energy because it is movement, because it transmits

the movement to another body—in place of an active principle. And at the same time, because M'Dougall is not an extreme and blind materialist, we find here the concept of a finality, however abstract and external, as a cause or principle of activity—but remaining outside it, and unavailable for investigating and explaining its concept.

Only, a little further on, while still describing the nature of play and summing up his view, the author finds the concept, or the implicit idea, of an active principle, while he adopts the word *libido*. He clearly does not reduce *libido* to a current or to an *x* indifferently capable of every kind of transformation—such as Jung¹ conceives it, though he has extolled this word—but he employs it in the richer and subtler sense in which it is used in poetry as well as in ordinary language, such as it is until lost in inadequate theories. And he speaks of play in lively style as follows: Activity which manifests itself in play “is the primal *libido* or vital energy flowing not in the channels of instinct, but overflowing, generating a vague appetite for movement and finding an outlet in any or all of the motor mechanisms in turn.” It is true that we may notice that the words “generating” and “appetite” are depreciated in value. We find here the usual game, the usual illusion of referring back from word to word the cause, the generative principle: from “appetite,” carefully bereft of all its virtue, to “generating”; from “generating,” equally stripped of all power, to *libido*; in this way *libido* comes still to be thrown into shade, that is, there is formed around it, as it were, a fence of words

¹ *Op. cit.* ; see note 50.

which ambiguously mean, and do not mean, originality—whence the problem of an originality fades away, and although not done intentionally, it is usual to avoid recognising and facing it. Hence the author, after having made of it an *x* and an idol, adopts *libido* to explain (!) the act of “generating” and “appetite,” instead of seeing or of trying to discover *libido* in appetite.—Nevertheless, apart from this tendency, and leaving also out of account the “running” and “flowing” and other terms and phrases which do not correctly represent the reality of activity because the image is too material, it is certain that the word *libido* is here at first adopted in its true sense, from which it is sprung, and of which it is full, and that a return is made for a moment to poetical and ordinary thought, and to the concept of activity as originality.

54

(Page 265.) “ . . . because the activity is always concerned with some object, the verbs chosen should as far as possible be transitive rather than intransitive.” In this remark, on which the author insists¹ (but without considering all the importance of this problem, and without either knowing or suspecting the reasons to the contrary), we see once more the same conception, which I regard as full of errors, in one of its fundamental aspects.² For while it is not in the least necessary that activity should refer to a distinct end, opposed to the subject, on the other hand, the object, as an intrinsic end, is a synonym

¹ Cf. note 58.

² Cf. the preceding note ; see also *Intelligence in Expression*, § 84.

of value, and, as such, is an active principle, it is really activity; and the intransitive verb and the reflexive are the most adequate expression of activity itself. For, contrariwise, by using the transitive verb we tend to lose the notion of activity, and to substitute for it the force of inertia, or to speak more precisely, the *schema* of a something which propels and which produces an effect through a transference of movement, and whose action always remains external. The truth of the concept of activity as a creative principle lies wholly in the truth of the reflexive verb,¹ and of the intransitive. There is no true novelty or originality, as far as we can know and conjecture, when action is only and absolutely extrinsic. And in this case there can only be, in my opinion, a mechanical action, and no intelligence.²

55

(Pages 269, 270.) The psychological doctrines contain, as I hold, common errors with regard to pleasure (inadequate views and errors which we find

¹ The reflexive in English—for instance, “it forms itself” in place of the Italian reflexive “si forma”—might lend itself to indicate an excessive objectivation, an opposition between subject and object, which does not occur in the reality of the reflexive act, or at least not essentially. “A thought forms itself,” if it were not that use corrects the sense of the words according to the reality of the very activity therein expressed—the above phrase would be, if literally understood, a false expression: “itself” would be the “object,” an inert or passive thing, and on the other hand, it is difficult to see what the “thought” would be, if not an empty subject, without any content, to which nevertheless the function of a cause would be conventionally attributed.

² See *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 82, 83; *Essay ad fin.*, § 10; in this vol., Index, under “Subject.” There is no more fatal error, I think, in philosophy and psychology than that of considering as primary and necessary the opposition between subject and object—in so far as the latter is a mental presentment.

in the pages quoted, though partly in attenuated form):

(1) The confusing of the two aspects of pleasure. On the one hand, pleasure may be regarded as an object of the will, understood as something sought for, distinct from the act of seeking for it, and in itself inert (pleasure so understood is in reality a secondary factor in the explanation of human actions); and on the other hand, we have pleasure viewed as a cause, as an intimate finality and value.—Yet this distinction ought to form the basis of all psychological study!

(2) The starting from a radical opposition between pleasure and pain (the tendency is to forget, to overlook the reality common to both). This view corresponds to an external and sterile conception. Pleasure in fact is intimately blended with pain, in a value which is truly real, and in which such a distinction is a something superposed or of a secondary nature and only gradual: *in a value of realisation and of truth* (intrinsicality), which is not excluded by the fact of its being crude, tormenting, and deadly.

56

(Pages 297, 301-303.) The author accepts the idea that there is a radical opposition between mechanical and conceptual memory. But this opposition, when thus pushed beyond certain limits, corresponds to a conception which is undoubtedly wrong.

In the first place, even mere sounds, "nonsense syllables," have some *meaning*. They are united, if not by discursive, at least by 'sonorous concepts,' however poor; through these alone they may be

recognised, that is, *identified*. Nothing is more difficult than to get down to mere mechanism.

The opposition between “mechanical memory” and conceptual is only one of degree. Thought cannot be excluded from the former, nor physiological conditions from the latter—or at least there is no reason for excluding them, if they be not excluded from the former. But the author inclines to agree with Bergson in holding the view that this opposition proves or indicates that the conceptual memory must be understood as a purely spiritual or mental function. Now—when we fully grasp the concept of psyche as *activity*—to represent or conceive of recollections as entities *purely psychical* and at the same time *preserved*, appears—with our present knowledge—an absurdity. The psyche has no existence except in realising itself ; and these supposed entities, which are conceived as *preserved*, would have a wholly material reality, however subtile. Their spiritual or psychical reality lies in their realisation, in their renewal. And they do not renew or realise themselves except in their conditions. A recollection does not persist except in material conditions ; it is the latter that really are *preserved*. Or, we may also say that a recollection, as a sensible reality, “persists” or “is preserved” : but this because it renews itself, perpetually renews itself, and in so far as it does so ; and always renews itself *in its conditions* (see *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay *ad fin.*, §§ 3 and 4).

(Page 324.) The author distinguishes and enumerates different instincts (fourteen in all)—an

exhaustive series, except a few minor ones, which are in many respects negligible. To each instinct there corresponds a feeling or emotion (a "primary emotion"). There is, for instance, a so-called parental or protective instinct, to which corresponds the feeling of love ("love, tenderness, tender feeling"). Then we have the sexual instinct ("pairing, mating, sexual reproduction"), which finds its correlative in "lust, sexual emotion or excitement, sometimes called love—an unfortunate and confusing usage." Curiosity is also classed as an instinct, and this is followed in the series by another which is described as submission. Again, we find the social or gregarious instinct, which under certain circumstances shows itself in a feeling of loneliness and isolation. Another is the "acquisition" or "hoarding instinct."

The feelings are thought to have the function of indicating the instinctive impulse at work in a given case. ("The primary 'emotion' . . . is an indicator of the instinctive impulse at work.") The same point of view is set forth in several passages elsewhere (cf. pp. 108, 328, 343, 346).

It is thus that, goaded by a constructive external point of view, we obviously lose sight of the *essential kinships* belonging to the attitudes and vocations of man. Sexual passion divorced from love : almost as if in the former, and, inferentially, also in the fact of reproduction, we ought not to recognise (though not as the only motive) that self-surrender, that losing of our exclusive individuality, which may be sexual passion, or it may be love, the alternative depending on differences of degree, not of nature.—

Thus love, and on the other hand the feeling of loneliness and of isolation, or home-sickness, are regarded as two quite separate things: for the former indicates the "parental or protective instinct," the latter the gregarious. Nor is any kinship seen between the two sentiments in a demand which is in us, and which is not exhausted in the individual, particular form; which is a consciousness and realisation of activity *as a principle*, an exigency and a value of relative impersonality, without which no society could exist and maternal love would be unintelligible as love.—Curiosity, as here represented, is certainly no longer the demand, the doubt, the problem, the limit and the effort or vocation to regain the unity of the act. This effort or vocation exists in every synthesis or act, and, if it is properly called curiosity only in certain forms, it is nevertheless such an essential aspect of activity, that it seems unjustifiable to exclude it at any moment (and this without adducing any proper argument), and attribute it to a particular instinct.—And what is to be said of avarice, which is likewise reduced to an obscure instinct, a kind of element or ingredient of the 'amalgam' of the psyche? It is not perceived, or else it is readily forgotten, that avarice is essentially connected with every form of individual and social utilitarianism, self-centred, or even disinterested as regards personal advantage, and heroically transcending the individual self. It is the will to transcend the actual, the quality, the value, the feeling, in order that the actual may serve for something else, for that which lasts—even if this be an idol. This exigency of transcending the actual, which is almost ignored, and

impoverished, or trained to ends of utility abstractly conceived, is an inexhaustible value and motive, as well in the practical and moral as in the theoretical field ; and its immense significance has certainly not escaped the notice of any writer of tragedies, comedies, or novels, or of any poet. This spiritual attitude, this vocation, exists, in varying degrees, in every human act ;—no less than the opposite principle, which is a longing for the value in the act : a principle of immanence, a vocation of knowledge, a re-valuing of feeling and passion, a prevailing of quality or of the *eternal*. And the latter attitude is met with equally in very different forms, whether as virtue or vice : it may be a passion for truth and a joy in expression and in knowledge ; it may be love, charity, generosity, or prodigality, dissipation, irresponsibility.

The poet sees the kinships of the different attitudes (they, that is, these ‘realities of principle,’ these lights, are the moving power of his verses). Thus the mother of Richard III., in Shakespeare’s tragedy, when her son, with pretended humility, craves her blessing, says to him :

“God bless thee, and put meekness in thy breast,
Love, charity, obedience, and true duty !”

King Richard III., ii. 2, 107.

This is a single thought : here the poet undoubtedly sees the unity and intelligibility of the different forms in a single conception, in a single principle, in the intimacy and greatness of a relative impersonality (consciousness or value of activity as a principle or as originality, in which the particular interest of the

individual has no necessary form or prominence), which principle we find in humility, in duty, and in the other virtues or feelings, which are invoked, as it were, to define and complete a single, simple feeling or attitude. But the psychologist, the psychiatrist, the sociologist, not excluding others who are called philosophers, would regard these mental states or emotions as things of totally dissimilar nature, and derive them from the most different circumstances. Thus, for instance, I imagine the following equations : charity=the transposition or sublimation of infantile erotic forms ; obedience=subjection to the head of the tribe, an acquired and hereditary disposition ; humility=the tendency to auto-destruction. M'Dougall is more moderate, but he too is obsessed by the idea of deriving everything from something else, and especially from fixed elements, from entities abstractly conceived and therefore objectively identifiable, and such as may be handled from without as quantitative elements ; and he would doubtless ascribe these feelings to some of the instincts enumerated by him, or the unity of the same to a conjunction or fusion of different instincts.

What a grotesque automaton takes the psyche's place ! The most powerful and subtle writers tell us of moments profoundly and tragically human, of clear and intelligible characters and acts, viewed as feelings, not as instincts. Shakespeare, Stendhal, Dostoievski, for instance, and all those who were and are profound and truthful thinkers, discover and create an eternal centre of truth, not a conjunction of instincts. (It is only Meredith perhaps who is content to let his significant words rest on an obscure

background of instincts, though he reaches by so doing, as I believe, only the appearance of depth). But psychologists, and even philosophers in general, are very far from giving due consideration to these writers, because *the logic of quality*, which flashes up in every beautiful thought, lies too much outside the forms and range of their science.

The term "instinct" is rightly applied to hunting. But if we speak of a "combative spirit," "spirit" is a better term than "instinct," because here we have to do with a more intelligible instinct or feeling. But if there be a doubt, it must not be believed—I repeat—that preference given to the term "instinct" removes uncertainty. For instance, what is the gregarious instinct? An instinct whose function it is to hold the group together (*op. cit.*, p. 153). What then is meant by this definition? Is there not here a "reifying" in the void? Instinct is something more massive, because defined as starting from facts, that is, from its presumptive effects; but in itself unknown, or known as a feeling (which is an intelligible and profoundly logical reality).¹

58

(Pages 345-346.) "The derived emotions . . . cannot be regarded as forces. They are merely incidents in the working of the instinctive impulses, which are the only true forces that prompt and sustain thought and action." "The poets especially

¹ This criticism does not apply to M'Dougall's excellent doctrine concerning the *specific* character of instincts; cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114, 132-133, 144.

are apt to personify such emotions as hope, despondency, joy, sorrow, and surprise, as agents that govern our thought and action, just as they personify the primary emotions." The author separates joy, hope, and the like, from the impulses which these feelings (according to his conception) indicate, but do not constitute, and his view is that common parlance as well as the literary language are mistaken in attributing to them force or energy, because the latter really belongs to the impulse. But how is the impulse to communicate with another to be separated from the hope and joy, the *value* of that communion, of that agreement? How are we to sever the impulse to realise or express a thought from our faith in its truth and our conviction that we are disclosing it?

For instance, joy is not, as the author holds, "a derived emotion," something accessory, or accidental in a certain sense, to the "instinctive impulse," which operates in a given case. Joy is an essential value of activity; it is synthesis itself, its lightning-flash, its apex, its song, its rhythm. Assuredly, joy cannot by any means be separated from its content, that is, from its own reasons, from a demand which is being satisfied; and when once it is understood as a single thing with its own intelligible reasons, it seems arbitrary to derive it, simply and solely, from factors which, as far as we are able to know (intimately), do not elicit it. And if there were a residuum (as the author seems to hint), the argument against poetical and ordinary language would not be well founded.

Here the idea of a value as *cause* (and therefore as a principle of subjectivity, as a true active subject) is, as we see, denied in the most explicit manner. (Cf.

notes 54 and 57 ; also M'Dougall, *op. cit.*, pp. 108, 215, 314.)

59

(Page 376.) “ It is of the essence of the aesthetic attitude that we do not inquire into the reality of that which we contemplate. We are content to contemplate without belief or doubt ; we accept and enjoy the appearance, without inquiry into the reality of that which appears, just because the appearance yields an immediate satisfaction and is so presented as to avoid stirring us to desire and action. How this is achieved—whether by balance of conflicting impulses, by restraint, by preservation of psychical distance, by detachment from reality—this is the artists’ secret.” It is true that the time and place of a happening, as a rule, do not interest us : not, however, because we forget them, but because they are wholly secondary (for instance, in an event or moment of life depicted in a novel) ; and above all, we must not believe that they are the sole reality. Activity has reality : and this reality must be considered, and not only the reality of the mere existent. Whether a personage has really existed, whether given circumstances have been invented—these matters are in general entirely secondary : and this is because we are caught up into the *truth* of a passion (and similarly of every beautiful thought), which realises itself in us, and can realise itself *ad infinitum* in whatever place. (It is realised in us luminously, as a reality and as a truth, precisely because this its power of infinite realisation is an actual value.) And if we do not ask whether and how often that

moment has objectively existed, this is not because we do not search for the reality, not because we are satisfied with an appearance, but because such questions are clearly irrelevant. If the writer is intent upon an intimate view of life, of being, we cannot ask him whether the case really happened, and where ; in dealing with profound realities there is in fact no longer any fiction. And if any one should diligently search out some hypothetical correspondence, or should inquire, for instance, whether the pictured splendour of a sunrise was really so seen in nature, and the day and hour when it occurred—such a one would not show (as is obvious) more vigilance or more scientific training, but only his inability to know a deeper overpowering reality.—We see then how, at least in an explicit theory (for in less articulate judgments we are not so easily misled), the reality and truth of art is lost sight of : and certainly this is again not without a reason which lies in the want of this notion, namely, the originality of thought.

It is, however, unhappily true that he, who more than all others exalts thought in its actuality, nevertheless expresses himself as regards art in words not very dissimilar to those I have quoted. G. Gentile says ¹ : “ . . . they (the philosophers) see that the artist shuts himself up in himself, takes no account of this world which limits their (the philosophers’) liberty in the system which is law ; he cares nothing for it, and outside the reality, that is, outside that which is the whole reality, he expands freely in a

¹ G. Gentile, *Logica*, ii., 1923, p. 130. Cf. also pp. 137, 222, 266, 328.

limitless outpouring of his very self ; as one who dreams, and is not without a world, but it is his own particular one, which he creates directly and governs according to his own *arbitrium*.' I shall not return to the question of the realistic exigency of art,¹ of the artist, who does not shut himself up in himself, who does not ignore any law—and there is no law, however external, of which it is permissible to assert that it cannot be understood (thought out), and in this way become art. He does not expand, but is rather engaged in a toilsome search for the thought and the object at the same time. He does not dream² ; and nothing is further from *arbitrium* than his own spontaneity or originality. The truth is that every condition, in order to become art, must be profoundly spiritualised, that is, *activated* ; that art does not admit a subordination of original qualities to any condition that is not made our concept, in other words, that is not originality of thought. But not for this reason would the words above quoted, and those of M'Dougall, be in the least justified ; they only assume from this circumstance a deceptive appearance of truth.—Yet the fact is that Gentile is speaking *not* of art, but of a moment of thought, which we find both in artistic and in philosophic thinking (and scientific at the same time), and which he rightly or wrongly symbolises in art. Moreover, his constructive effort of resolving the whole (the resistance of matter, the plurality of subjects) into an absolute subject, into the actuality of an absolute

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay *ad fin.*, § 11 ; and in this vol., note 47, § 5.

² See note 47.

thought, is assuredly not without consequence, in this, that he marks with stronger tints the opposition between a moment of thought (for the rest, in itself abstract and unreal, which he symbolises in art) and another moment, which is the thought in its full value, the "absolute thought."—All this does not mean that a more lively interest in the problem and problems of art would not have made Gentile adopt other language, even if he had wished to take art as symbolising an abstract and unreal moment of thought. And he would probably have avoided formulae such as, for instance, the following, namely, that in art there does not exist the "ulterior mediation in which the full thought consists" (p. 137). This "ulterior mediation" is not met with in the truth of thought : it is one of those abstract concepts on which Gentile has led the attack. When we hear doctrines couched in terms like those I have quoted, in which it is said that art has no philosophic value or exigency (for the rest, Gentile is, as is well known, opposed to this extreme position in regard to the concrete work of art), it seems to me that those who enunciate these doctrines have not in mind a living thought of poet or of artist, and that their words beat the void ; or at least that they take no account of innumerable instances, including very remarkable ones. Let us consider the verses in which Dante in the third canto of the *Paradiso* defines charity (verses 64-90). This definition is rigorously true, and might set an example to scientific thought (if we leave out of account some religious figures and names, which do not correspond to the scientific spirit of the present day ; but this does not affect the character

of Dante's original thought) ; *and this same rigorous truth is at once song and most sublime poetry.* Be it also remembered that in a minor exigency of truth, and of truth in all its aspects, these verses of Dante either would not have come into being or probably would not have risen so high.

60

(Pages 421-423, 431.) The author describes with admirable truth the love-feeling which a man has for his dog, and how this feeling arises in the case which he takes as an instance ; and in a note he acutely remarks that he chose this example to serve as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Freudian dogma which asserts that love has always a sexual content and origin. Yet, as he goes on to a more explicit interpretation (p. 423) he withdraws, as it seems to me, from his preceding living presentments, and loses sight of love's real nature, which he explains by deriving it—with particular regard to the case described—from a series of instincts and instinctive impulses (protective or parental instinct ; self-assertive impulse ; gregarious impulse ; active sympathy). Further on (p. 431), he refers to an interpretation of Schopenhauer, which, I have no doubt, comes near to defining the true nature of love ; only he rejects it as being metaphysical and scientifically worthless. This explanation, which he discards, is not formulated happily, and it certainly lends itself to all kinds of objections : according to Schopenhauer, we love one another because we unconsciously know that in all living creatures there is but one and the same entity.

We find the same idea very frequently in our thoughts. Thus, when an appeal is made to our sense of pity, to our thoughts of peace, we are reminded that we are brethren, that we have a common origin. It is, however, not clear why this fraternal relation might not be, contrariwise, a reason for hatred. The fact that in all creatures there is the same indwelling principle is not an obvious reason for loving them. Nevertheless this formula, and other similar ones, implies, and up to a certain point expresses, the reason, the force, and the essential nature of love, and with some modification it ought also to suit those who make a rigid profession of only believing in experimental truths. In reality, the value of a resemblance *ex principio*, of an identity of principle, of a universality of principle, must not be understood to start from the consideration of a generality or of a universality of fact ; it must start subjectively, as value. And what is meant by the formulae, to which I have alluded, is that we love, that we are moved, impelled to love, because in the act of knowing or of recognising the other we become, or may become, conscious of an identity of principle, and we discover life as *originality*, an originality which is not essentially individual (particular), absolutely and exclusively individual ; we discover it as a power in which the individual form, tendentially, and in a certain sense, disappears—although this power has no existence except in the individual form ; and this discovery is an original and motive value.

The principle itself has been expressed in many different ways, in the Gospel, as well as before and after. It deserves to be pondered ; and if it be but

dimly discerned, it ought to be sought after, not disregarded in the name of a one-sided science, in this one-sidedness not properly a science ; and we ought to meditate on the *experience* of a reality of principles. Otherwise one falls into hopeless conjectures of derivations, as ingenious as they are inadequate. Hence—like M'Dougall, and like the psychiatrists of the recent schools with still greater readiness—*after having dimly discerned the same principle in different forms, one supposes that these forms ought to be derived from one another* : love from certain forms of erotic instinct ; love from an instinct of the parents, especially of the mother, towards their children.

61

(Page 432.) The desire of communicating our feelings and impressions is interpreted as a form of, or better, as a derivation from, the social or gregarious instinct. And since the author—as is conformable to a deeper insight—does not posit certain separations between feelings and thoughts, between feeling and thinking, it is probably to be understood that from the same so-called social or gregarious instincts we are to derive the desire of communicating our thoughts and of finding agreement ; and that in this way we ought to derive the exigency according to which we believe that, what we think is true, should also be recognised by others as such. Yet the disagreement of some—not less than the difficulty or the unsolved problem and not less than the internal contradiction—excludes activity as realising itself in the originality and necessity of its forms and values beyond every given limit, and therefore that dis-

agreement constitutes the obstacle which offends or denies truth in its most intimate exigency : hence it seems that it is the very truth-value of a thought which ought to make us not indifferent to that which is contradiction, to that which is disagreement. Nor is the question put whether any society would be possible, any docility, any knowledge of any one else than oneself, any offspring, without this exigency through which the individual form does not find its completion in itself (in its particularity). Nor does it appear that any relation of principle is seen between a demand of agreement (attributed to a gregarious instinct) and charity or love (attributed to a protective or maternal instinct).

Similarly many other definitions and explanations of feelings (cf. pp. 334, 420 ; also these notes) prove what inadequate, hopeless theories result from incapacity, and still more from aversion to an internal view ; from the non-recognition of an original reality, which at the same time is not void of character in its very originality ; from the fact of *the logic of quality* being almost unrecognised when thought becomes more explicit.

And, in accordance with the privilege of so-called scientific psychology, the different states of the emotions are described, for the most part, without any of that intense and overmastering development which we find in life and art, and which brings us to value, to logic : to the vision of *life as truth*. Rare are the internal movements which arise freely from one another, rare are the kinships that form themselves in accordance with a novelty, and an internal necessity, which convinces and illumines. Hence

descriptions of states of the emotions stripped of their *verve* and fascination (and yet, comparatively speaking, this volume might be cited as setting a praiseworthy example, by adducing remarkable exceptions: cf. the preceding note)—and no account is taken of the fact that they are thereby stripped of their truth at the same time! We find no unity and development: the psyche is made a shapeless and unknown material, some features of which are here and there gathered up; but these features are isolated, and only attached to the remainder by means of an obscurely spatial, external relation.

62

(Page 445.) The author here deals with voluntary action, and holds the view that the characteristic element of will, or of action, in so far as it is voluntary, consists in “the accession of an impulse from the sentiment of self-regard.”

Nevertheless—and this is specially the case if we oppose *will* to *spontaneity* and *passion*, to *feeling* and *knowing*—it seems to me that this impulse (“the self-assertive impulse”) does not represent the characteristic and original element of will¹ (and I leave out of discussion the explanatory value of the term “impulse”). A man who, so to say, bears the stamp of the will in his physical and moral aspect, enthralls, represses, controls, disciplines, hardens, and stiffens himself before all others; and he makes of himself and of others an instrument and a weapon (it matters little for what ends, and what may be the true value

¹ See *Principii di etica*, §§ 85, 86, 99-103; and *Intelligence in Expression*, § 83.

of these ends : this is not a problem on which his thoughts are centred), and this utilitarian spirit, which ignores or transcends every actual value, is his vocation—more than exclusive individuation and more than self-assertion.

“ Self-regard,” pride, punctilio, arrogance, aggressiveness, the lust of power, can only bring about a weak or powerless will. Alas ! there is no *amour propre* that avails, nor pride, nor punctilio, if the constructive spirit in us be lost or weary : that is, an implicit faith in the ‘ useful,’ in that which serves for something else, *a repressing and overpassing the instant (whether it be the ephemeral or the ‘ eternal ’)*. He who should be wholly possessed by love of the passing hour and of its brief eternity would well be able to dance without effort and tirelessly, but he would not know how to move a step in order to alter his position *because he wills it*, that is, because he proposes to go to the place *A* for reasons of utility with reference to himself or others, or for a pleasure or a good not directly thought (felt, followed) in its value.

Here, as always, in order to understand the facts of consciousness, we have to descend to essential attitudes involving immense significance ; to original vocations, which are not arbitrary, and on the other hand not necessary as mere resultants, but intelligible as essentially free ; to a single concept which reflects all the kinships of the spirit. Psychology brings us, even when we are unwilling, to a *cosmic* meaning of the reality with which it deals, provided it reach sufficient depth, and, if it does so, it cannot but be philosophy.

63

The criticisms I have made present greater interest, and have all the more significance, in that M'Dougall is a psychologist of no mean value, and his book marks a noteworthy progress in psychology—a progress too in a philosophical direction.

It is sufficient to cite the following passage (pp. 308-309) : “ The capacity for recognition, and so of all remembering, is at bottom that fundamental function which James calls ‘ conception ’ and which perhaps is better called simply ‘ knowing.’ Even in its simplest forms it involves a rudimentary act of judgment, the judgment of sameness. . . . This we have to accept as one of the fundamental faculties of Mind ; we can give no further account or explanation of it, because we cannot explain the generation of Mind out of something that is not Mind. . . . We have rather to recognize that all those specialized highly developed forms of mental activity which are usually treated in text-books in separate chapters on imagination, memory, conation, affection, association, conception, judgment, comparing, reasoning, and so forth, that all these functions are involved in the simplest mental acts ; and that the process of mental evolution in the individual, as in the race, does not consist in the addition or creation or development of new faculties. Mental development consists rather in the becoming more explicit of these distinguishable, but not distinct, modes of activity, by the accentuation in various acts of this or that aspect of mental activity.”

64

In the preceding notes ¹ I do not mean to say that the study of the *derivation* of any given form of life from other forms ought to be neglected ; I only mean that the fact of derivation ought to be considered with ' historical sense ' : that is, without separating the consideration of the conditions of a given form of life, and particularly of the presumable moments it has passed through, from the introspective view which discloses the origin in so far as it is present and real ; especially it ought to be known whether and when attention should be chiefly directed to the conditions and to the past. I know, for instance, of a child just beginning to speak, and taking wonderful interest in horses. He sees them in every sign or figure, dreams about them at night, imitates the sound of their trotting and galloping, and, according to his vocabulary, names them continually. What can be the causes or reasons of such a vehement impulse ? Experiences from the past ? The history or pre-history of man—*atavism* ? Or actual values and forms ? The old friend of man ? Or, for instance, the horse's vivacity and rapidity ? Here it seems that we ought to go back to the past. The same child shows a lively interest in mechanical constructions, e.g. in a box, in motor-cars. Leaves and flowers very complicated and curious in their structure do not interest him : but a box that opens and shuts never ceases to attract him. Where are we to look for the reason or the explanation of all this interest ? In experiences from the past ? In an

¹ Cf. especially notes 50 and 60.

idea of cause and effect, or of condition? It is difficult to reply. What is certain is that he who should maintain that the child interests himself, I do not say in a motor-car, but in any mechanism, *because* these contrivances are the conquests of his ancestors in former ages, or for another reason of similar ethnological character, and not also for a present reason (a reason truly original, being at the same time old, intrinsic to the activity of thought)—such a one would be on the wrong track. The ‘derivative’ cause and the ‘original’ cause, the second causes or conditions and the first cause, in a certain respect, are confounded. Experiences and vocations developed and specified themselves together.

65

The difficulty of understanding the principles except by conceiving them as *rigid ideal schemata* leads to many false reasonings, and there is perhaps no greater obstacle in the study of philosophic problems than this, or the *forma mentis* on which it depends (cf. note 4).

It is said, for instance, that “the moral sense is relative”; because, with a rigour anything but philosophical, even those few concepts which one possesses with regard to morality are made rigid, and being lost in their original and fruitful reality, are no longer recognised, as soon as the forms in which they realise themselves differ, however little, from those in which they are defined. Thus, for instance, the fact is disregarded, that if the ‘cannibal’ intends to keep good faith only within a very limited circle, this does not mean that he is ignorant of the

principle. To be ignorant of it he would have to be ignorant also of bad faith. In order to be able to affirm that a savage of a given tribe is wholly ignorant of that which we call *good faith*, or *charity* or *truth*, or of some other realisation of the universal, we should have to think of him as absolutely different from a child. Yet people like to compare the savage with the child, who has undoubtedly a perfectly clear understanding of falsehood and deception. In a given society of human beings there may be no *charity* that is practically effective, unless it be in relation to a kinsman or friend, and this only in so far as it can take form in the coincidence of a solidarity of particular interests. But its being actuated in a more limited circle does not exclude it, or otherwise we should have to exclude its concept and principle also among ourselves : because in face of an exigency of charity more comprehensive, profound, and free, we are 'cannibals.'

But if we are 'cannibals' in comparison with any one whose nature is less rude than ours, this does not mean that our concept, or feeling, of the good is "relative" ; inasmuch as it expresses and realises a principle (of individuation and of universality) which is co-essential with life and not ephemeral, and because it is a moment in a struggle which loses itself in the extreme limits of time, represents an enormous conquest, and has the reality of a *cause*.

66

Psychology is still to-day extremely materialistic : quality and value are dead elements. People do not see anything but *things*, and even though energy and

“ dynamism ” are spoken of, the psychic reality is seen only in its quantitative substratum.

On the other hand, the subtle truths of philosophy touching the psyche are discredited by philosophers themselves, because these truths are compelled to uphold fictitious constructions (ambitious constructions, which have nevertheless no small merit in urging to the diligent and profound study of these same truths).

Lastly, writers, critics, and poets touch with fine, rich, and true thought philosophic problems, but they do not treat them in a direct and explicit manner, perhaps because they are half scared and dare not ; inasmuch as they find themselves confronted with doctrines which are unapproachable by reason of their obscurity and arbitrariness, with offensive errors, and often with a boundless, false security which intimidates and disconcerts the layman.

67

The concept of liberty, to which all true philosophic thought must attain, and whose presence distinguishes, as I believe, profound and fruitful philosophic thought from the external, poor and one-sided philosophising of an immense array of writers ;—this concept may be stated as follows : *liberty* means essentially the same thing as *activity* ; the two terms may be interchanged (except for secondary references).

Liberty is not empty *arbitrium*, which would be *contingency* and chance, and therefore determinism once more ; and it is not something which is said to

exist only in the highest degrees in the scale of life-forms, or in salient moments (R. Steiner). This is of all others the clumsiest hypothesis. From this point of view those who hold that liberty is an illusion may easily defend their position. He who looks for liberty outside spiritual *necessity*, in some kind of void, and only in forms which are grossly evident, instead of seeking for it everywhere—such a one certainly does not find it; he is too destitute of the concept of spiritual liberty.

Liberty, as I understand it, is certainly something more than an acceptation of the necessity of the intrinsic relations and principles of activity: it is a making, a realising of these necessities (which without the act would not exist), a realising, whose intensity is not given, of which the essential thing is a being able to be. *A being able to be*: an ulterior realisation or “overcoming,” which is value and motive, a value actual and final, a principle at once of intelligence and of action, the reality of any theoretical and moral value.

In a passage cited by me,¹ Parodi depicts the internal opposition existing in thought with too strong colours, as I must observe, especially after some considerations of Bosanquet. The conclusion is not to be opposed to the premises (in fact, the premises exist only in the conclusion), and the decision is not to be opposed to the motives: except that (and this is certainly what Parodi means) by “premises” we understand isolated judgments in a false reasoning, or in general the conditions; and

¹ *Della intelligenza nell'espressione*, p. 117; D. Parodi, *La Philosophie contemporaine en France*, 1919, pp. 481, 482.

the same must be said of "motives," understanding the latter to mean the conditions before they are really motives. But up to this point it is chiefly a question of terminology. What I wish to notice is that the opposition between thought and its conditions, if it were protracted (which is impossible) into the actuality of thought, would really paralyse it, by positing on the one hand *a subject more or less empty* (a liberty more or less empty) and on the other *an object more or less inert*. A certain opposition must be admitted : yet, not so much an 'opposition' as a 'difficulty' which must be overcome in the thought's formation. Liberty is a subjectivating or activating, a perpetual conquest of the absolute, a spiritual integrity which realises itself : and—in so far as it is true that there is effort or vocation or grace—it realises itself with regard to a minor integrity of the spirit. Nevertheless thought forms itself smoothly : because, in so far as it forms itself, that is, in so far as it exists, it is entirely unity, thought. The problem, the datum that must be assumed, is not the reality of an opposing thought, such that there has to be a conflict. Anything like a conflict or a discord is certainly not met with in the necessity through which a truth is revealed, or a thought is formed, in every moment of daily life.

68

If we exclude the idea that there is, strictly speaking, in the unity of a thought, an opposition between a major and minor actuality of the thought itself—for the second term of the 'opposition' is not really *active*—nevertheless it must be recognised that the

actuality is not the same, on the one side in the full actuality of the thought and on the other in the problems ; in the *concept* and in the particular concepts.

Integrity would not be an integrating, activity would not be an actuating, if there were not in its self-actuating a gradation, both as an actual possibility and as successive effective integrations. Were there but one degree of actuality, there could be no liberty (effort, vocation, responsibility). For, on the other hand, it would be impossible to consider the actuality of thought in its value as a perfect model outside liberty and time, and to reserve gradation for effort alone.

A truth reveals itself directly : but not without *triumphing*, not without an overcoming. This 'triumph' cannot perhaps be properly called a 'victory' ; but its name is certainly *liberty* ; it implies a being able to be, a value, an effort or vocation ; grace or merit.

Doubt is essential to certainty itself. Doubt nestles in faith, and in every thought of truth, in every absoluteness of thought : and this, not as a thing contrary to faith or to consciousness of truth or of the absolute, but as a principle of faith and as a principle of truth. The very proposition : $1+2=3$ is nothing but a habit or a mere definition ; it is not a thought nor a truth, if no doubt be cast upon its exactness, its universal validity, its meaning. Doubt is essential, I maintain, to the very necessity of truth revealing or expressing itself. In spiritual activity (that is, as I hold, wherever we do not abandon all our concepts, except those belonging to the conception

of reality viewed as mechanism) a shadow, though barely sensible, must accompany the light. Even in the full actuality of thought there has to be the problem : as it were the suspicion of a concept more particular and less subjectivated, that is, less actual, not identified in an eternity of values and forms, not *solved*.—But he who speaks of doubt, or of a problem, speaks of liberty, of value. Doubt implies differences of quality, of degree, of intensity, in the realisation of a thought.

Now it seems to me that rhythm, in its spiritual reason, *is* thought, in so far as the latter is a value of realisation and in so far as it implies a varying degree of actuality.

Liberty is an *activating* (subjectivating, spiritualising), a regaining of the reality of thought. Now in saying that the *force of rhythm* is this self-realising of thought, do we describe spiritual activity too roughly ?

Is rhythm, in its spiritual reason, also in the necessity, the unrestrainable necessity of truth ? Or better, is the necessity of truth, rhythm ?

There are of course mechanical causes of rhythm, and mixed causes, so to say, in so far as the rhythm reflects effort applied to matter, “ the weight of the body, and the effort of the wings.” But the self-revealing of an identity of principle, the self-realising of activity because of its being a *value*, the fulness of thought, the expression, the solution of the problem, is this in itself essentially rhythm ? Are we to identify rhythm with the *cause* and with the essence of poetic thought and of thought in general ? It

appears to me that rhythm, in its purest principle, is one and the same thing as thought, as every highest value of thought. It happens, however, that other causes of another nature are confused with true rhythm (which is a moment of beauty ; the *glory* of thought, that is, a consciousness of activity as an origin, and—at one and the same time—as an infinite origin), and even substitute it, clothing themselves with its value—just as through one good work many mediocre ones gain credit, and as idle generations derive character and impulse from a moment of true greatness. Thus the necessity of truth, its self-revelation, may accompany the rhythm of one strophe out of a hundred, or rather be identified with it ; and there will always be some to deduce the reasons of rhythm from the other ninety-nine strophes and not from that one.

69

Of course rhythm is not properly represented if we seek its type in a happy and ardent improvisation : its nature is much more subtle.

The most laborious researches, the fact of there being a thesis, a scheme or course traced out, the heterogeneous and transcendent end—all these things do not necessarily impair the spontaneity of the expression, its formation from the plastic material in fulness of thought. They do no harm ; indeed in different ways they may bring about a loftier expression, provided always that every transcendence is overcome by the expressive power, that is, provided that the expression has sufficient force, is a value and an intimate cause such that it remains active, such

that it is not adopted as a means which is descriptive or illustrative (of a reality having elsewhere its full meaning and its proper material), such that it even takes up in its motives—more peculiar to a given expressive element—the profound motives composing the life-texture in every field. And so great is the power of the spiritual substance, that nothing can injure it, where there is the true artist or poet, and, if it forms itself, all the toil of elaboration is undoubtedly redeemed.

The creator is not satisfied unless he has reached a certain degree of *contemplation* ; where the quality is in itself real ; where the object is realised in the interpretative qualities or principles, which, because they are activity and immediateness (in one word : *activity*), through their intrinsic, infinite necessity, constitute the *truth* of the creative thought ; where there are *true reasons*, that is, the qualities of mind which (according to their proper nature) are not lost, when we penetrate into them further ; where there is a certain intensity of meaning ; where the expression is life in its entirety, and is sustained by an intimate and vast necessity ; in short, where there is a certain intensity of beauty, such as to fill up the exigency of the translucent form, and, above all, that *demand of justification* which is the measure of life's value in a given individual.—It is at this point, whatever it be, that we reach a perfection which has an organic necessity of its own, not derived or imposed, and this I maintain is the cause and the value of rhythm, the force of rhythm : a spiritual integrity in which the expression rests and forms itself perpetually.

The temporal process is essential in that intimate bond which makes rhythm (essential whether in the preparation or in the reality of the work of art), but it is secondary. Where also the inspiration is unexpected, sudden (and immediately clear and irresistible, one and the same thing as its execution), we must not suppose that it derives its value from the rapidity of its process, but from a necessity always renewing itself, *from an intimate power of reality and of truth*. In the perpetual novelty of appearing (in which that perfect substance consists) we must say that it is not the surprise which makes this novelty, but the expression, the given expression, which in a higher thought has no equivalents ; the truth (as an unlimited intimate necessity of values and relations) which comes into being only in and through the act.

70

“ Finality ” does not necessarily imply that one thing serves for another, nor that the end is distinct from the subject. Indeed, strictly speaking, *the end which is not the subject itself*, which in the present is not activity, an active subject, is no longer anything operative.

Every logical necessity, even if formal, is finality, because it is internal necessity and originality.

Finality is the intimate reason of activity to realise itself. Hence, as I hold, the concept of *value*, essential to theoretical as well as to practical activity, coincides with the concept of finality (internal finality).

For instance, expression is a final principle and

value. Expression is an ever-present value in a thought : which value has in its being—that is, *in its being a value*—its inexhaustible end. Expression is finality : provided it be not understood as an end which is given, as an explicit or abstract end—as such, expression is inactive, is something altogether barren. Expression is finality in so far as it is a motive, a principle-value, omnipresent, everywhere operative—everywhere operative, because original, because it does not await the intentional act of a presupposed subject, but it is itself activity and subject ; a principle-value to which is essential its self-making, and its not being given ; a value which has an incorruptibility and purity of its own, which springs, it would seem, from its eternal novelty, from the extreme intrinsicity of its *raison d'être*, from the extreme non-exteriority of its law ; a principle which draws in a marvellous way from within itself the necessity of *being*, that is, of realising itself more and more in matter.

Finality is a spiritual integrity which is always being gained afresh—this integrity being understood not as a goal or end essentially distinct, but as that internal reason—which philosophy and art study and reveal in various ways.

71

“ Development implies and supposes a subject and a law as real, and already given.” “ It is necessary that ends exist, that is, that they already exist.”¹ But *if the end is already given, it has no longer any*

¹ Cf. F. de Sarlo, *Il pensiero moderno*, 1915, pp. 384, 386.

power ! It seems that in these propositions, here only stated in brief, there is wholly wanting the concept of an original value, or value of realisation, as well as the idea of an internal finality. If the laws are already given they cannot be otherwise than extrinsic, operating from without. They cannot constitute a value, a reality of consciousness. They cannot be an internal character or principle, through which activity is not bereft of character, although free, indeed, *in its liberty* ;—they cannot be that principle or intrinsicity which is the value, the reality, the power, the spiritual *necessity* of liberty itself.

“ The act of willing, that of representing, even that of feeling, are expressions which have no meaning if a subject be not postulated.”¹ But willing, representing, feeling, these are precisely the real subject—as a value (as a value of realisation, as a cause). How much the subject is inseparable from feeling, representing, willing, seems not to be taken into consideration.—That which must be postulated is the *existent* : but not as subject, not as the chief thing (which is the actual value). The subject which pre-exists, or which is conceived of as a condition, is the *existent* : yet whoever should call the latter “ the subject ” *par excellence*, would overlook that fugitive—and powerful—principle, which it is our task to investigate.

72

The *formal* (*essential*) cause, the *final* cause and the *efficient* cause—in the facts of consciousness—

¹ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 395 : I state this conception in its most obvious sense and in the actual phrases of the text, but not word for word.

may be comprised in the concept of the cause as a *value of realisation*. The *material* cause includes the vast world of conditions. Among these, however, may be distinguished and understood as a material cause in the strict sense of the word, those conditions which are not simply conditions, or a means or element, but which are a *material of realisation* or of expression. In this sense we may distinguish three causes or orders of causes: the *original* cause, the *material* cause, and the *conditions*.

73

Is the cause to be found in realisation, in taking shape? Or in those intrinsic necessities—which yet do not exist outside their realisation, outside experience? Self-realising is one of those eternal exigencies: why make of it precisely *the cause*?

Undoubtedly different aspects of the reality can be brought into greater or less prominence. But in my opinion the reality may be adequately described, if we say that realisation is the cause, understood as the realisation of intrinsic necessities, in so far as they are such; as the realisation of an identity of principle. We might also say that the internal necessity, or infinite *identity*, of values and forms is the cause, in so far as it realises itself.

74

*Pleasure understood as a principle or cause.*¹ To recapitulate what has been said elsewhere, I point out that in this meaning the word “pleasure” overpasses the limits whence it is referred to enjoyments

¹ See Index; cf. *Principii di etica*, §§ 10 and 11.

in which the individual in his particularity usually takes a prominent place ; it is (in this sense) opposed to the idea of " pleasure " as an end posited by the subject and distinct from him, as an object of the will, for instance, in a hedonistic system of life ; and it includes every immanent value. Pleasure, in this more essential and general sense, is a value, a motive ; it is another name for taking consciousness, for self-formation or self-realisation, and even for pain.

When we go to meet pain ; when we wish to see that, the sight of which only brings us loss and suffering ; when our eyes even turn to the painful object : here there is no question of a trifling physiological fact, nor—as I hold—of a habit only, nor of an effect, which has elsewhere its cause. We have rather to do with a principle which has a cosmic significance, with an *active principle*, with a *cause*. Expression (realisation) is a cause.

Nevertheless this first cause is not only in the expression, is not only in the principle of individuation. The cause is identically the realising of activity as universal, that is, in its intolerance of a limit, and in its exigency of essential identification and of total transparency. This is particularly evident in the moral realm ; in hastening to meet the painful point, where the defect lies, where something is wanting (e.g. " the lost sheep," " the prodigal son," the victim, the martyr).¹ The case is the same with a contradiction, an error, a lacuna, a problem, a difficulty, when we have to deal with theoretical problems, with the exigency of truth. And it must be recognised that also in a vision (in a more re-

¹ See *Principii di etica*, § 25.

stricted meaning of this term) both principles are active: the principle of individuation, and the principle of universality; the taking form, and the taking form especially there where a unity and transparency *ex principio* needs to be regained, where something is lacking, where an obscure, unexpected change presents itself.

But if any one should ask to which of the two values the term "pleasure," in this essential meaning, is most suited, it would not be easy to answer. Individuation and universality are two demands in one, and they are completed in one point; and although there is, or there may be, disagreement between the two, yet universality does not exist without individuation, nor the latter without the former.

75

A value of realisation, a *necessity* of realisation, a value which is a realising, underived, self-necessary, which operates in so far as it is a value, because of its value:—this *vis a fronte*, this *cause*, this reality, must be recognised and studied as a fact of experience, and in the experience of critical thought, as a luminous explicative principle. Scientific method requires that there be no subordination of experience even to the most firmly established postulates of reason. And if an abstract reason, which seeks to interpret the real and to resolve it into mere existences and quantitative relations, refuses to accept, to recognise this fact; if abstract reason does not adapt itself to this reality, it has not anything sacred about it: the essential, the ultimate exigency of

reason is that of understanding, that of the universality of its value and forms, not the latter in themselves. I repeat that it specially belongs to the scientific method not to subordinate experience to *preconceived* exigencies of reason. For instance, the attraction of bodies at a distance was a thing that contradicted the scientific principles once generally accepted. It gainsaid the Cartesian mechanism, and outraged common sense. Nevertheless, to build a foundation on this principle, to admit it as *true*, as Newton did, was in conformity with an unprejudiced, honest, and fruitful scientific spirit, and also with the same common sense. There is need to show what the concept of realisation, viewed as an original value, as a *cause*, contradicts.

76

The necessity of a creative principle in the heart of nature is also posited when it is asked how the world can be without a creator, and who then created the creator, and so on. To which there is no reply, except in a kind of agnosticism, or in an ascetic view full of renunciation, according to which the world is *only the shadow of an unknown reality* ; or else, in admitting a *creative principle*, and not a blindly mechanical one, in the heart of nature, in its innumerable forms (provided always we do not renounce knowledge, but look for it where we find conditions particularly adapted for the search, that is, in the forms of thought and consciousness).¹

¹ This is in accordance with the belief, which I hold, that we also are nature. Of course, if we take our stand simply on dogma, or, on the other hand, if we attribute the Cause to blind necessity

77

The *novelty* (originality) of which I speak, understood as I conceive it, that is, as a temporal reality, may seem to be lacking in truth and unequal to its task, considering it has to interpret the same reality which flashed as the perfect act of transcendental thought, as the omnipresent reason towards which the "potentialities," according to Aristotle, are called, and before all others the active potentialities of the soul nearest to the act: I see the difficulty attaching to this spiritual integrity, so ready and watchful, and of such height and grandeur, *although unsupported by any transcendental reality*. Nevertheless I consider every other hypothesis arbitrary and risky. How weak are the arguments, at least the explicit arguments, which are employed to deny reality to spatial and temporal conditions; to deny that several moments coexist and follow one another;—arguments according to which we ought to prefer the formula: "*novelty is in the eternal*" (this really excludes novelty, becoming) rather than: "*the eternal is in novelty, in time.*"¹ The following

or to chance, the dilemma has no reason for existing, and the conclusion does not hold.

[This paragraph has been already inserted in the English translation of *Intelligence in Expression*, p. 117.—Translator's Note.]

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, chap. vii., Essay *ad fin.*, §§ 3 and 4. To re-state my opinion briefly: I hold that no principle has reality except in its realisations, which are temporal, both as realisations and as *a realising*; and that it is false to describe anything as timeless, if we wish to speak from a truly realistic and non-partial point of view. If then *essence* (to state it in traditional terms) exists only in temporal and spatial forms and accidents, how are we to account for the *one* essence of the whole? And how are we to face the problem of an infinite past of life-forms, or of a beginning of life in time? (Cf. Thomas

considerations relate to the least fugitive arguments (besides those referred to in the passages quoted) that I have been able to find. It is with these that the attempt is made to demonstrate the unreality of an *existent* independent of the thought in which it is conceived or postulated as independent. Such alleged reasons, however, do not appear to me convincing.

“ Everything lies within mind ; whatever may be outside our consciousness, is by definition inaccessible, unknowable, and for us nothing.” These and similar statements are often made, perhaps because we are still dazzled by the discovery that thought makes of itself : and assuredly everything in so far as known is a term of thought, and it is impossible to affirm an absolute unknown. But it is another thing to assert that consciousness exhausts the object in every case. The following objection especially seems to me clear and indisputable : things are undoubtedly posited according to an intrinsic necessity of thought, but this does not mean that necessity of thought completely explains *the particular value* of the necessity wherewith we are *compelled* to posit things. The crudest realism does not attain to the brutality of the naked fact, of the chance, of the shock. Further : necessity *ex parte subjecti* does not explain the meeting or the imposing of a fact *in a given place and time*.—The perception of a thing varies with the

Whittaker, *The Metaphysics of Evolution*, 1926, pp. 384 and ff.) These objections are perhaps not decisive. In any case, they should not force us to the assumption of an extra-temporal reality ; rather, I think, they should compel us to posit the hypothesis of a solution as yet utterly unsuspected. It appears to me that we cannot think of anything as timeless, unless it be supposed to be non-mental, static, and a universe in itself.

variation of the subject, but also in relation to an x .—Thought never reaches the absolute particularity of matter, because that which is thought is always a quality, a universal.¹—If I say : “ I cannot assert that I have slept, because if I did, I could not be conscious of sleeping, and I cannot now really know that I slept ” :—would this argument be convincing ? Yet this is in substance the argument above referred to, and the remark must be made that it is too easy. That it is not permissible to depart from conscious activity, from activity *qua* subject, from its implications and inferences, in so far as they are still thought ; that what is essential in these implications and deductions, that is, the positing the existent as really such, independently of the former, is an illusion and an error :—these are theses which could not be defended without considering (and this is not done) their gravity, their connection with our deepest, although less explicit, convictions, with our most genuine experiences.

“ Space is a concept of the subject ; therefore space and the spatial reality cannot be conceived of as an absolute reality in which the subject is found.” But is space *only* a concept of the subject, a mere ideality ?

“ Matter is exteriority in every part with reference to every part, absolute multiplicity. Whence then is derived the notion of an order or system in nature, the notion of that uniformity which we find in widely differing strata of natural facts ? Whence the unity of nature if not from thought ? And if this uniformity is an attribute of thought—and since on the other

¹ Cf. F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic*, vol. i. chap. ii.

hand, without this unity or uniformity or form nothing in fact would remain of matter—is not the conception of an independent physical reality evidently superfluous ? ” In this piece of reasoning the first step already is in itself difficult and obscure. It is one thing to recognise in matter absolute exteriority and multiplicity ; it is quite another to see in it an absolute heterogeneity, a non-uniformity. *Exteriority* does not necessarily involve *heterogeneity* ; the first concept only is inseparable from the concept of matter.—If, for instance, two persons see a mountain, are there in reality two mountains ? And is there not a common fact belonging to the object (the mountain in itself) ? Certainly, the immediate element of matter, which as the material of actuation enters into my act of perception, in so far as it is such, does not exist in another perception. It seems to me that there is not, and cannot be, strictly speaking, a material element common to two perceptions. But this does not exclude a uniformity, a common property, in the material element through which the object manifests itself at different moments and to different persons, and proves a structure approximately constant. As regards the object (that is, the mere material, the conditions), is there no order, no system, no uniformity ? Undoubtedly the notions wherein we recognise the object are our own and original. Undoubtedly, for instance, divisibility is our concept. But, on the other hand, if we admit that this notion is conformable to a pre-existing physical reality, which it interprets, this does not exclude its originality (its internal necessity, its being a reality of thought). Also we must bear in mind

that originality in itself alone does not account for its own validity in a given case.—As regards the object, the thing, is there nothing? Is it true that the mountain does not exist, but rather as many mountains as there are perceptions of it? But why should not this absurdity have weight in the question? Is it because the argument refers to, and rests on, a reality external to thought, or more exactly on a reality which is not thought? It is clear that this reason is out of place where the problem deals precisely with the existence or non-existence of a reality independent of the thought.

If, however, the arguments which imply a reference to that which is not thought have no weight, why is there a constant reference to a transcendent activity and dialectic, to a “thought,” which is not the thought that we know (and of whose concept philosophy ought to be jealous)? For it is only when such an “absolute” thought is alluded to that some appearance of probability is acquired by certain conceptions, according to which the conditions of activity *must* be presented as of themselves *existing* for our “finite” thought, but in reality are posited by “thought.”

“It is impossible to affirm the independent existence of the object, because in its existence independent of the thought, which thinks it, we cannot know it.” This proposition rests on an ambiguity because the verb “to know” admits of different meanings. So far it is true, that the material object cannot be known *intimately*, cannot be made one with the subject. But that constructive knowledge, which avails itself of the fact that our perceptions do not vary only

in proportion to their internal exigencies, to their inalienable originality and nature—that this constructive knowledge has no value, is a question too readily regarded as solved.

“ Order belongs either to nature or to the mind : in the first case the mind becomes unintelligible, in the second, nature.” But why, for instance, cannot the idea of an external condition be original to thought, and at the same time conformable, in a given case, to a physical reality not absolutely posited by thought ? And hence a condition such as, by adapting itself to the physical reality, may tell us something about the latter ? For—and this we must not forget—not every original form shows always and in every realm the same validity ; the validity is not in it.

“ It would be impossible to perceive a reality lying outside the perception itself.” This statement seems more serious than it really is. It is true that if we posit perception as a reality independent of matter, that is, of that immediate element of matter which we may assume as material of perception, or as material of expression, the separation between perception and matter appears insurmountable. But this conception of perception (and of spiritual activity) is false, and also runs counter (as I think) to the “ ingenuous ” view of non-philosophic thought, to which—to its disadvantage—the conception itself is attributed. That “ outside ” (the perception) is inexact. It is impossible to place a spiritual reality and a material reality in contraposition as though they were two separate entities. The first has no independent existence. There is no reality absolutely immaterial, non-spatial. Synthesis or thought

does not realise itself except in matter, in conditions not merely actual.¹ And if this be true, it is impossible in exact language to speak of a reality "outside" perception (with reference to that reality which is perceived at a given moment). There remains, however, the difficulty of conceiving a condition which at one and the same moment is thought and a mere material element. But how can we deliberately consider that this difficulty, or rather this obscurity (which does not strike us as a manifest absurdity or *contradiction*), is so serious as to be only comparable with the difficulty of affirming that there is not one sun but as many as there are subjects that contemplate it, or moments in which one or more subjects contemplate it ?

Also the reasons which would make matter impossible—matter regarded as an element infinitely divisible, and external in each of its parts with regard to each of its parts—are too readily regarded as decisive.²

78

Neither time nor the becoming : the effects are to be led back to the causes—without a residuum !

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay *ad fin.*, § 4.

² Although I am unable to bring the concept of matter and the concept of energy, except by means of an hypothesis whose content is extremely impoverished, back to the concept of activity, and although I am convinced, on the other hand, that we must assume a non-illusory or ambiguous reality of the *x* to which these concepts refer, and which science investigates : yet not on this account can I consider myself a materialist ; because I hold that an intrinsicality-finality (an intrinsicality which is a *vis a fronte*) is such a reality, that critical thought cannot but become aware of it. Furthermore, I do not pretend that the problem of the intelligibility or rationality of that *novelty* (that is, of spiritual activity)—which is nevertheless the thing most *intelligible*—is wholly solved or, on the other hand, void of sense.

This is a common mental attitude. Hence *activity* is denied by the upholders of mechanism (and these are, to say the truth, the majority even of philosophers, though the contrary is asserted). Why is this? In order to reduce effects to their causes. Thus reason requires. What reason? The first and last exigency of reason is *to understand*, that is, to realise, in its most intimate values and forms, the world of things and living beings, universally.

In a mechanical system the becoming, that is, time, belongs to the "irrationals." In fact, the extra-temporal, the "eternal" viewed as not *in* time, but as annulling it, more than anything else satisfies the commonest mechanical conception.

79

Necessity does not belong to the abstractly conceived reality, *independent of its representative symbol*; but it belongs to activity when the latter constitutes itself in the "symbol," in the form. The possibility of substituting the expressive signs does not affect their being indispensable and essential.

The universal does not destroy, it fortifies its conditions. Humility does not annul the individual, it strengthens him. Whoever because of the annulment of our ephemeral individuality infers the unreality of the "empirical reality," does not really know that infinite or that universal of which he speaks, and in which the individual in his material form is not wholly annulled.

80

Experience demonstrates a correspondence, a rela-

tion between time lived through or concrete time, and time a condition of succession. Time lived through is always translated into *succession*. But this relation is obscure ; just as the relation is obscure between activity viewed internally as *effort*, and externally as movement ; as also the relation between the realising or expressing or revealing of a thought or moment of consciousness, and the succession of several moments in that one moment, in one and the same place. Nevertheless, in this case, if expression is necessary for being, and if in every presentment there is a physiological plastic material—of which the same must be said as of the material of artistic expression—essential to the existence of the presentment and of the thought : in this case we see with indubitable clearness at once the intimate becoming of a thought and its formation in the condition of succession in a single space.

81

A certain thing, or a principle, *exists* (spatially). This means that its *simplicity*, or *identity*, or *spiritual interiority*, which we know, may be conceived to be divisible into as many parts as we please, *ad infinitum*, where each part is external with regard to each part. This refers, of course, to the material conditions, without which, however, that principle has no reality—and has no *being* whatever.

82

Is there a reason for admiring magnitudes which are merely quantitative ? Why do we admire the

starry heavens? The vastness of the synthesis and its infinite source; the demand for a limit, which is nevertheless inconceivable and impossible; an extreme impersonality of being,—are values of thought, of the soul. Yet the fact is, we feel wonder because those distances are immense relatively to those with which we are more familiar.

“An act of kindness, a thought full of light, is an absolute. But the distances of the stars, their velocities or that of the electrons, are relative. They are overwhelming in comparison with those which form part of our daily experience: that is all.” Yet our wonder in presence of the starry heavens refers to something other than ourselves. The comparison between our earth, terrestrial things, and those distances, those quantitative magnitudes, is essential to it. But this is not the result of illusion; because the material differences have a character of absolute-ness, if matter is not mere mechanism, if it conceals an originality and is, in its most intimate structure, in some sense activity.¹ Moreover, the material conditions of activity, the bodies of living creatures, *are* in a certain sense ² spiritual activity itself. Let us also consider that it is neither an indifferent, nor a purely relative, matter, that, for instance, a man’s stature should be 1.70 metres instead of 17—because the reality would probably not remain in the *statu quo*, if everything were multiplied by 10. Dimensions do not seem to be only conventional or relative; it does not appear that everything could be repeated

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, § 93; but cf. above, 77, footnote *ad fin.*

² See *op. cit.*, Essay *ad fin.*, § 5.

on a larger or smaller scale. On the other hand, nature reveals profound diversities of structure, almost a different world, in her different degrees of size: and this seems hardly consonant with an absolutely mechanical conception of physical nature.

My position is that, given the essential unity existing between *activity* and matter, we must not ascribe to error or to illusion the fact that the quantitative differences relating to bodies and to matter, insignificant, as they are, in the dry light of abstract reason, rich in gifts for imagination, formidable and decisive in practice, fill with amazement and admiration whoever attentively ponders them, even if he be an ascetic, or a sceptic. If we were immaterial spirits, and if, on the other hand, the "empirical world" were mere mechanism, the problem whether the quantitative magnitudes are in themselves marvellous might occur, but it would not have the same significance.

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PART II
POETIC THOUGHT AND CONSTRUCTIVE
THOUGHT

How Deep!

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PART II

POETIC THOUGHT AND CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHT

83

Theory, if it be not bad theory, is truth. To put the processes and the conclusions of a thought which is external and, as it were, voluntary, in place of theory, and thereby discredit the latter, is the tendency of all those whose nature inclines them to disparage cognitive activity and consciousness—and also of many who, rather through a misunderstanding than from any deep conviction, are induced to join the former. Theory must not be underrated, but corrected, and saved from a practical (and not a theoretical) tendency, that is, an abstractly constructive attitude, bereft of every internal content or *necessity*; which tendency is the reason of its poverty and of every discredit attaching to it. I wish strenuously to oppose an error, against which my book, *Intelligence in Expression*, is wholly directed. I mean the error which lies in the statement *that it is only by renouncing the categories of intelligence that life can be understood.*

This opinion can be explained, and is perhaps justifiable, so long as we take no account of the “category” of novelty (or *novelty-necessity, novelty-intrinsicality, novelty-universality*, these expressions

being regarded as equivalent) among the "categories" of intelligence ; so long as we pay no regard to this concept or category of novelty-necessity, not subordinately, and as it were tolerated, but in all its rigour, in all the lofty dignity of logic. And it is a very false attitude to suppose that intelligence, reason, or any principle of scientific knowledge is constituted by abstract intellect alone, which gives us the conception of the world only as mere existences, and as relations of condition, *plus* an *x*. If science is to display the proper scientific rigour, its construction must be all the less one-sided.

Reason is primarily a raising of oneself to an objectivity, which implies our moral nature : that is, it implies a taking consciousness of activity as a necessity which is not exhausted in a particular determination, as a self-necessary principle. Reason is a self-uplifting into a less particular and exclusive view ; it is a value. Reason is something which can neither be constituted nor substituted by trifling arguments.

Synthesis, the principle of identity, of non-contradiction, conceptualisation or essentialisation, individuation—these are principles both of life in general and of reason.—Only these principles must not be defined by referring to, and almost depending on, their applications, in which the greater part of their meaning is lost : but rather by searching for them in that intimate experience where there is originality, reality, and a non-provisional certainty. The principle of non-contradiction, for instance, must not be defined as starting from the datum, that is, by considering it in its applications (where its reason is no

longer grasped), but as starting from that absolute, that intolerance of a complete disconnection and heterogeneity in the reality, which is the principle of thought itself. The principle of non-contradiction is an effort or vocation of unlimited identification in the necessity of the values and forms of activity; it is this intolerance of limits; it is the value of this necessity or universality (it is the very principle of the unity of the act). And this is not really grasped, it is not rendered explicit, in the formula: "The proposition A is B, and the proposition A is not B, cannot both be true in the same sense"; or in the formula: "There is a contradiction when without any reason of distinction two different modes of being or of behaviour are attributed to one and the same element in one and the same system."

Another example: $A=A$. Here attention should not be given to the datum, but to the thought which affirms itself to be the same in two moments. From this point of view, this equation is a revelation of thought in its deep, not formal, universality; because it can be realised only through an *essential identity* of thought in its successive actuations. $A=A$ does not stand to signify merely an abstract or "conventional" identity; and in the last resort even the "conventional" identity is based on an essential identity (cf. note 104).¹

¹ Here each A symbolises a moment of thought, that is of actual thought (because another kind of thought, as I hold, does not exist). This formula is used in a different sense when an argument is deduced therefrom for the purpose of emphasising not so much the identity (always *ex parte subjecti*) as the difference between both moments, inasmuch as in the first moment thought posits A as a mere existent, abstractly, and in the second moment

Similarly, as long as deduction and induction are defined with exclusive attention to the datum, the false concept will always be asserted, namely, that logic, or explicit, discursive thought in general, is not a moment of life, but an "instrumental good" for life, a secondary organ which is incapable of interpreting life (activity): the false concept will be affirmed that life is foreign to science, to the rigidly logical processes which are known as deduction and induction. But deduction and induction must not be defined—as if they were instruments or machines for testing the objective world—by formulae which cannot satisfy any one who desires to touch the original, transparent reality of thought, which is neither approximative, nor external, nor conventional, nor supported by, nor indefinitely referred to its effects. *Deduction is a realising of intrinsic necessities*; where deduction is essentially an original, free act, a looking all around. Thus if I know that a given person has said *no* in ten cases, and if from this generic fact I deduce that he will also say *no* in a given similar case, this is a deduction in a formal sense. But if I know the character of that person, that is, if I know the intrinsic values and forms of activity *in those particular specifications and shadings*; if I realise in an irreplaceable experience these principles, tendencies, characters and forms, and strive at that point to omit nothing, to identify myself with that moment of life: then I deduce in a non-formal sense, and this deduction, being essentially free and it realises A both as subject and predicate: in opposition to abstract and materialising logic, which passes over, or endeavours to do so, the difference between the two moments, or else takes no account of them.

necessary (I am speaking of *internal* necessity), interprets the facts of consciousness. Nor does this involve a displacement of the meaning of "deduction" by referring it only to the investigation of that which is consciousness and history. In the physical sciences also the statistical and external proceeding is secondary, and although in these our sensibility, that is, all that is "subjective," is suspected and attacked, nevertheless in scientific deductions that which operates is the non-formal deduction, a full realising of original and intrinsic values and forms of activity, in the individual case, where also the *individual* is a principle, an internal necessity—deduction in the sense I describe. The same truths are in their essence still clearer and more interesting (as I think) in relation to induction.¹ Induction and deduction are principles of the very spontaneity of thought, not processes more or less foreign to it; they are values, value-principles; and more particularly induction, which is an *essentialising*. One may make this matter a question of terminology, and say that it is one thing to view induction as an *essentialising*, as a principle of poetic thought, as a creative, immediate principle of knowing, as a principle of spiritual simplicity or unity; while it is quite another to regard induction as a process of constructive knowledge. But I repeat that the tendency is not to see that the first process, namely, this intimate principle of essential identification, is by far the most operative, not only in art and historiography, but also in theoretical constructive, as well as in practical and ethical, thought.

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, chap. viii.

84

The principle of induction lies in becoming aware of a quality precisely as such, that is, as something original and at the same time not particular.

It is only in researches referring to the physical world that this proposition may have an appearance of truth, namely, that induction is nothing but a generalisation based on the enumeration of many examples. But even in the investigation of the physical world, the moving force, if not the validity, of induction, is found in the value—a value of internal necessity, and hence of universality, however conditioned—of a quality which is discovered by considering one case or example, and *oftener* several cases or examples. For the discovery or putting into prominence of a quality (common to several cases) is not only the discovery of a quality common to several cases, or to one and the same case in several moments or relations. This is only one aspect relatively secondary. But as a guiding principle of thought and of the first importance is the discovery of a quality as something which is not only in that particular case, because it is something deeper than that case, something active and eternal (self-necessary). Speaking generally, it must be borne in mind that the world of quality is not fragmentary and inert (as we are inclined to think when we consider quality only in reference to the stimulus); that the more it is split up and broken, the more its kinships *ex principio*, intolerant of delay as they are, renew themselves; and that in this reality the principle and meaning of induction must be sought for.

In this sense, according to the above definition, induction is a continual discovery or revelation of activity as originality-intrinsicality. And this discovery is a principle and guide of the act, which is, or in so far as it is, a spontaneous choice and development.

85

The essence of reason is an uplifting to a certain objectivity, to a view less exclusive, less strictly personal: and this is instinctive, like love. It is instinctive in the sense that it is not the product of a reflection, of abstract deduction. Reflection may be reason, but the former cannot produce the latter by an effort shorn of internal necessity. No initiative or argument can replace its value, which is an actual and final value, a realising of activity as an original principle, self-necessary, infinitely original; a self-realising of activity in its values and forms—such as is always the nature of poetic thought and of instinct.

86

The organism which lives only a few hours, accomplishes the act of reproduction, and dies, as for instance the Ephemera, and reason, which is a self-realisation of the activity of thought, as a *necessity*, which does not find its fulfilment and is not exhausted in any particular realisation, are forms of the same principle.

87

Intuition is *an identifying of the real in the original and intrinsic values and schemata of thought, and it is the direct value of this identification.* Therefore, far

from being a particular aspect, or a secondary or subordinate moment of cognitive activity, intuition is the principle of knowing, as regards both poetical and scientific thought. In fact, the concept of intuition coincides with the concept of original value. And equally every reflective thought is intuition. But inasmuch as there is a tendency to consider as *intuition* a thought less meditated, I prefer not to adopt this term, in order that a higher appreciation of intuition may not be understood as in opposition to reflective thought.

88

(Windelband, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, 1914, p. 64.) "The true being of the individual consists in an inexpressible, unique connection (*Verknüpfung*), which is not an object of knowing and of science, but only a postulate of conceiving ; and which may be grasped only irrationally through intuition." No words in my opinion can have a falser ring. Intuition is here called irrational. The author shows ignorance, as I think, of the nature of intuition, which is an identification in an internal necessity of values and forms. *There is excluded from the field of the intelligibility which is clearest and most our own, from every most lucid centre or principle of intelligibility, that value which is individuation, novelty, creation, spiritual concreteness, realisation, expression.* The writer seems to be unaware that when reduced to a certain spatial schematism (spatial and temporal relations, formal identities, quantitative relations), reduced to a mere position of existences and of relations, to "conceptual" notions (in an abstract

sense), reason becomes a mockery ; and that even when so conceived it implies an internal necessity and a value of realisation, and cannot in any way exist without this unrecognised value, that is, it cannot be separated from this value of realisation or individuation. Thought is made—not a moment of life, capable of comprehending life, and in which it is not absurd to search for the very principle of creation and of being, but an instrument which, if it were not for that very originality, which also this writer cannot succeed in entirely obliterating, and which he inadequately interprets, would be barren and blind, in fact not thought at all. Similarly “conceiving,” or “conceptual knowledge,” is made an abstract, schematic, extrinsic, voluntary proceeding, and the value of the concept is entirely lost (in fact consciousness exists only as a conceptualising or essentialising agency, and conceptualisation is an original, unfailing principle, identical with activity).

89

Poetic thought, a self-necessary realising of values and relations, may, as a fruitful field of study, throw new light on widely different problems.

In comparison with that constructive knowledge which arranges presentments more or less from an external point of view, and does not find the truth and unity of principles (or else with difficulty and erratically, by passing through extreme experiences, and because it is not merely constructive); but in which knowledge there is more effort, more initiative, perhaps more responsibility, and in which there is a

consciousness in a certain sense more 'our own,' more familiar; this original realisation of self-necessary values and forms, that is, poetic thought (in a wide sense of the word) has something about it which erroneously, but not altogether unjustifiably, common parlance sometimes calls "unconscious"—because it gives the name of "unconscious" to that which is involuntary.¹ In this sense poetic thought may be likened to instinct in general, because of this consciousness not willed, and because of a particular adherence of activity to the material in which it realises itself. For this material has in this case a higher value than in constructive thought, where the representative symbol can be much more easily substituted and is in a certain respect irrelevant, although equally necessary.

90

Poetic thought is original, *spontaneous*: it cannot be said to be "unconscious," because consciousness is essential to it. How can any value, which realises itself, which is itself the cause of its realisation, be called "unconscious"? It might be called a value not willed, not recognised in our more explicit consciousness, a value which says sometimes much more than lies in our intention and cognisance; a value profound and rich in inexhaustible and unexpected truths. If we cannot reconstruct the formation of

¹ The word "unconscious," in its non-literal sense, as meaning either dimly or non-explicitly conscious, is generally rendered in Italian with the word "inconsapevole." Therefore the use of the Italian words "inconscio" and "incosciente" often appears to be less justifiable than that of the English word "unconscious."
—(Translator's Note.)

these truths, and if this fulness of life surprises us : it is, nevertheless, activity, a self-forming in the material, which formation is a value, is consciousness.

The term "unconscious" is often misused : how much consciousness is essential to any and every fact of consciousness is too little considered.

91

Art is certainly *conscious*, and to a very high degree. *Art, far from being non-conscious, is a conquest of consciousness.* Wherever we enter the realm of art our obscure impressions become intelligible, and their becoming intelligible belongs to the essence of artistic creation (cf. note 47). Innumerable happenings are interpreted by the light of a present, intrinsic and perennial cause, and it is this which constitutes contemplative knowledge and art. Yet it is true that in artistic creation consciousness is less 'our own' or less particularly ours : not only because of the necessity or universality and relative impersonality of its aspects (plastic, discursive, ethical, and other values) : but also because there is not that *effort* (compulsion, external discipline, struggle in overcoming difficulties) which certainly plays a great part in the preparation and execution of the work, yet does not constitute it ; for such effort is in general not expressed.

Of course, if we only call "conscious" that which arises from deliberate intention, the forms of art, in general artistic thought, must be regarded as an unconscious product. But this is a restricted, one-sided point of view, whose motive lies perhaps (if this

statement be made for the purpose of exalting art) in a certain negative attitude, in a certain complacency which is felt in denying consciousness, our humanity and our responsibility ; and in the veil of mystery which shrouds the “ unconscious ” ; and not less in the failure to understand the reality of thought, or of consciousness, as a value, as originality-necessity, as an internal finality.

92

The word “ conscious,” then, is often adopted in common language to denote a consciousness which is more explicit, intentional, willed, reflexive (and too often impoverished) ; and especially a co-ordinating of presentments *ab extra*. Hence it is said, and in this case not without truth, that poetry is unconscious, instinctive ; that thought is formed unconsciously. But this use or abuse of language does not prove that there is an unconscious consciousness, nor that the being conscious is not essential to the existence, to the formation of consciousness ; nor does it demonstrate that there are motives which, while they are not mere mechanism, are on the other hand something which is not value, which is not consciousness—even if in our most explicit and reflective consciousness we know not how to interpret them adequately, or are not aware of them.

93

We must wait for a spontaneous realisation of thought, we must wait for a non-arbitrary reality of values and forms which originally actuates itself : otherwise we have no thought, no truth. Hence

nothing is more vain than to seek truth, or beauty, or expression, as one who says : " I wish to find truth (beauty, expression)," instead of having in his mind some problem.

We must wait for the actuation of self-necessary values and forms, that they may realise themselves according to an originality or spontaneity which is infinitely their own, according to an internal necessity. The will may cultivate the flower-bed, but cannot generate the plant ; indeed the will is generally and essentially the foe of that spontaneity, that immediate value of consciousness, that value which the will represses and chastises in its effort of transcendency.

The practical spirit, the intelligence formed to be a weapon of the will, ready, sure, aggressive, and brilliant, does not wait for the ' self-necessary ' : the latter is a gift of the gods only granted at a high price. Doubtless the practical man is not wholly bereft of it, for otherwise he would be entirely void of all understanding. In fact, he *avails himself* of a certain vein of thought, of a certain spontaneity of thought, which from his earliest youth found its own ways and forms, but he does not deepen it just for the reason that he makes use of it, as an instrument. For this spontaneity (originality) is not deepened except by itself ; and when any one avails himself of it for extraneous ends, and does not centre himself in it, when he does not make himself the servant of his own thought (instead of employing it), the progressive discovery of deep-seated or essential points of view, that is, the realisation of a deeper unity in living nature, owing to the intimate and universal

character of the modes and values of the latter, and especially, the implicit discovery of this intimate and universal character, cannot be the inner motive principle in thought's development. The different innumerable notions circumscribe one another, they touch, interlace, intersect, and combine in a thousand ways ; in a certain sense they become defined more exactly and surely, in a purely relative respect, that is, in their reciprocal relation, but substantially they remain as they were, elements whose nature is not penetrated, bases of actions, and of errors both practical and theoretical.

Hence we can understand what sort of thing the reality of a thought is, when we reflect that *because of its reality*, which is originality and internal necessity, thought can be so little roused or adopted at will and manipulated, and this all the more in proportion as it is *a thought*, full, intense, and purely cognitive in value. The practical man looks at it differently, regarding it as an instrument that lends itself to everything. In reality universal comprehensiveness, the complete absence of all one-sidedness, is the supreme exigency of thought. But its originality, full of character or internal spiritual necessity, makes us understand how *arbitrium* (intention, will) is in itself so poor and ineffective, when it wishes to become a substitute or give existence to moments of theoretic thought, or of practical and moral life ; and why the critic in poetry, the poet in criticism, the geometrician in criticising his own science (see note 95), and similarly others, are seen to be so terribly, indeed so unexpectedly unequal to themselves.

94

The disinterested search after truth we meet only in the artist or in the philosopher or scientist, in so far as he is an artist, in so far as he is a *poet*. That is, it is found only in an original identification in the values and forms of thought : an overwhelming, unrestrainable, inimitable process, outside of which our thought is powerless. Carried away, consumed by this reality, as by a value, by a *voluptas*, by a reason absorbing and exigent as life, poets and students are instruments of truth, and seek not to satisfy, in an impoverished thought, aspirations and ambitions of an extraneous order.

Nevertheless it is the general tendency of philosophers and poets to stray away from that original fire, in which is the rare substance, the concrete and whole content, the imperishable value of their work. They are ready to prefer a vocation or an inspiration which is, so to say, intentional, and often deceives them. In reality this effort does not lack serious justification. Man is intent on constructing with deliberate purpose : it is in this that he finds satisfaction for his ambition ; in this he feels himself perhaps more intensely responsible, and this represents for him the supreme moral value.

95

“ I cannot say that I think when I am not aware of it.” But when are we aware of thinking ? Unless by “ being aware ” we understand simply the being conscious, however dimly, or in an implicit way, it must be said that the contrary is true. We are never

aware of thinking. In this sense thought is always "unconscious." The being aware is relative *to something else*. I am aware that I am aware : but of the act in which I am aware that I am aware—of this I am not aware. And if I am aware of that act, I am not aware of my being aware of that act, and so on. The being aware is conscious, because it is a value : but it is not conscious in a reflexive sense. The same is true for every realisation of values. Values and forms, in so far as they are operative, are original, free, not dominated or contemplated ; in them thought is wholly absorbed. It is well said by Louis Weber (*Revue de Métaphysique*, 1923, no. 1, p. 90): "Le géomètre . . . qui suit une démonstration ou qui découvre une propriété nouvelle est tout entier dans les combinaisons opératoires conduisant à la conclusion ou faisant surgir le résultat inattendu ; il ne se regarde pas penser, et, pour ce qui est du penser géométrique, il est moins apte à le considérer objectivement que le non-géomètre. Le dédoublement à l'infini du *je pense* est possible lorsqu'on ne pense à rien." Also critical thought is generated and works, so to say, innocently ; not through a voluntary arrangement of known elements, but directly, originally.

96

If at the time when painting had risen to its fullest bloom it was believed, and the painters themselves believed, that the proper function of art is to imitate, that is, to copy nature, in showing the error attached to this view it would be worth while trying to see whether there be not in this mistake some reason which is neither transient nor negligible.

The artist does not precisely aim at that which really constitutes the value of his work. *How far can the object of our effort be identified with the motive-value of the work?*

The value of a work of art, which is both its cause and its being, lies *in the reality (in the self-realisation) of a thought*. But can we directly search for what is the reality of a thought? The glory of thought? *Activity?* Is it possible directly to seek (inward) truth, that is, a limitless intimate necessity of values and forms in their self-realisation, in their being?

We must ask ourselves whether in searching for activity in itself the creator may not fall into a poor subjectivity, without *objectivity* and disinterestedness, without amplitude and light, without *contemplation*, without that gift or grace that he would wish to find. Sensibility grows dense and contradicts the principle of truth and universality if it posits itself as an end and does not strive to gain comprehension, comprehension of every reality, of every object and datum. In the nature of thought there is, as it were, a hopeless deception—which we meet more clearly in practical activity. Thus, for instance, in the case of charity the object-end of an act of love cannot be entirely identified with its value and its first cause. The benefactor must love the creature for the creature's sake and believe in the result, in the utility of his work.¹ If he does good only for the love of God—that is, for the sake of that infinite 'impersonality' without which there would be no quality or value of goodness in his act, without which neither compassion nor idea of compassion for the creature would

¹ Cf. *Principii di etica*, § 52.

arise, and in which lies the cause, the value, and the essence of a good act—if he does good in order to reach this higher level, he loses it altogether, that is to say, he loses the purity, and the present value, of an infinite subordination of his own individual form. Thought exercises itself strenuously, displays and finds its glory, while aiming at an object which in itself is perhaps void of value, but on the condition that it aims at that object with faith, and not as one willing to be deluded with regard to its value. For instance, the necessity of the particular, individuated in time and space, is necessity (universality) of thought, power of thought, an eternal demand of individuation, but on the condition of our taking real interest in the particular in and for itself.¹

But on account of a still more unavoidable reason, it is impossible to seek activity simply because it is activity, originality, essentially that which acts, makes, seeks, and which otherwise has no value, indeed, no existence. The reality- and truth-value of realising, this value as an object of search, as a *target* to be aimed at, is nothing : it has no existence except as an inimitable agency. Hence it is that a value cannot be 'described,' and that, in doing so, it is lost, if the value itself does not dictate our words. Whoever 'describes' the subject (instead of being carried away by it) finds neither simplicity nor greatness. The motives of living activity, which are

¹ It is especially among the mystics that we notice the aspiration to reach the bare presence of the cause-value, outside the particular and outside the form (as far as possible) : the form, whether as cognitive presentment or as practical realisation. And therefore among the mystics there are some who discountenance (and not fruitlessly) the said reasons ; but, in my opinion, without weakening them.

great and simple, form themselves and, as it were, come to us ; and he who should wish to seek them directly, as we look for things that exist previously to our search for them, would not find them. Value is original—arising from that night which ascetics call life : in reality from that night which is neither value nor life, because what is essential to this value is realisation, no less than the material in which it realises itself, and its long course of experiences and of enrichment.

The effort to search for the immediate and the universality of the immediate, that is, for *activity*, while neglecting objective experience, seems destined to be illusory and harmful. Nevertheless, in a work of art, all its beauty and greatness depends on this : namely on the subjectivity or *activity* of the object ; on not losing *activity* in searching for the object ; on not missing in the object the active principle of being. And it is hard to think that it is impossible to search for (understanding the word in a wider sense) that which makes the value of art, the secret of the artist and of its greatness ; and that the artist must of necessity aim at the thing that he represents, at the objective experience, and forget the silent power of his synthesis, through which alone that experience has reality and value. But even the painter who, more than any other, in realising on canvas what he sees (of course, according to the profound truth of his thought), does not so much seek to portray what he sees, as to *listen to* the individual and universal thought in its song, or in its cry :—if he wholly identifies himself with this, will not even he be wedded to that which is the vocation of thought,

whose nature is a vocation of experience, of penetration into the material (I mean, into a material which is not only an occasion or a pretext) ?

On the other hand, who could represent without lessening it, and at the same time in an explicit form, the value in which the appeal and the stress of life is always being renewed ?

In a certain sense the value which moves and affects us is never found in the things that we say, not even when we speak of that value and of nothing else ; it is rather found in the way, in the intensity with which they are said, in the simplicity and immediateness, in the spirit of truth to which the expression conforms itself.

So that also in art the interest in the reality which is being portrayed, penetrated, made, is not wholly identified with the value of the making of this reality, of its self-revealing certainty and truth, that is, with the true value and first cause of the work ; and of the latter the creator is less conscious.

97

An object which is, and not only in a secondary sense, distinct from the subject, an object not being activity and subject, would be impossible : but in the measure in which we approach such a mental presentment which is neither activity nor subject,—this is rightly called the *problem*.

Only the *condition*, the stimulus, the datum, the thing supposed, that which is regarded as existing independently of thought, and like an x , can be understood as an object opposed to the subject by reason of a fundamental and irremovable contrast ;

as an object which is not a subject, that is, which is not activity. It seems, however, to me that "object" in this case is not the most suitable term, because the *object* implies the activity of the subject. And the condition in so far as it is perceived as an object is already activity, subject. The object is already activity, active subject. Every sensation, every perception, every numerical relation, every formal system, is activity, necessity, novelty, value, active subject.

98

The concept in poetry and in art is intensely present and active in its expression: and this is because and in so far as the reality is not *supposed*, is not *a something else to which reference is made*. Art desires to actuate, to be, the reality, not *to be referred* to it. Reality lies in expression: it is not conceived as a mere existent, to which are referred different attributes or qualities (the content). The attributes are not grouped or collected round a supposed permanent basis: they are not only united in a relation which has a spatial or external character, in a relation of inherence or coexistence. Every attribute renews the whole. *The logical subject in poetry is the content, not a reality to which is attributed a content* (that is, a complex of activities, qualities, properties). The actual thought is the true subject of the proposition. This is why a work of art shows such a full reality. Yet we must remember that all the types of structure of the prose period can probably be found again in poetry, and the difference with regard to these structures or syntactic forms is secondary. That which really makes the difference

is the fact of a non-subordinate originality ; and it is from this that the diversity of form arises.¹

The attribute renews, gathers up the whole. For instance, we find in prose : " Peter is generous," and in poetry : " O generous Peter ! " We say in prose (I refer to an extreme and abstract conception of prose) : " Peter is generous," or : " There is a reality x which in the same space and at the same time has for its attributes (a) the fact of bearing the name of Peter, and (b) the quality of being generous." This is the scheme of constructive, materialising thought. Reference is made to a fictitious, in a certain sense conventional, base, to a conventional identity, which is readily exchanged for an absolute reality.

Poetry says :

" . . . in his will is our peace " ² ;

and prose : " There is a reality, which is his will, and our peace."

In poetry we have :

" Full of a vague thought that leads me aside

From all others and makes me in the world go alone . . . " ³ ;

in prose : " absorbed in a vague thought, which separates me from every other thought, and makes me solitary in the world . . .," or the like. The principle of individuation and the principle of universality, in which the infinite of that solitude, and a something in it which is lofty, joyous and unique,

¹ This passage has been inserted, almost in the same form, in the English Edition of *Intelligence in Expression*, p. 4. (Translator's Note.)

² " E 'n la sua volontade è nostra pace."

DANTE, *Paradiso*, III. v. 85.

³ " Pien d'un vago pensier che mi desvia

Da tutti gli altri e fammi al mondo ir solo. . . ."

PETRARCA.

have their reality and significance, these principles—intimate and universal—are not here operative in the development of the thought, in carrying us into the necessity or truth of moments of life. This thought of intimacy and of universality, this present *glory*, this solitude, is not that which forms, dominates, and guides the period in this version. Here my solitude is rather represented as derived or at least conditioned by the fact of my being separated from every other thought. And the word “full,” with which the first verse begins, would be clumsy, intolerable in prose: only in the verse it has the force of a verb, and is already illuminated by the whole concept.

Take another example. Between love and the thought of death there is a kinship *ex principio*: because the thought of death expresses the losing of our more particular, exclusive, and narrow nature. The thought of death, and love, and truth and Fate (it is to these concepts that Leopardi's thought turns in the same ode, entitled “Amore e Morte”) alike lead to an idea less restricted and ephemeral, profoundly and supremely impersonal, which is consciousness of activity as a self-necessary and infinite origin. Hence

“As brothers, at the self-same time, Love and Death
Were by Fate begotten.”¹

And hence Death

“Is well pleased the youthful Love-god
Often to accompany. . . .”²

¹ “Fratelli, a un tempo stesso, Amore e Morte
Ingenerò la sorte.”

² “Gode il fanciullo Amore
Accompagnar sovente. . . .”

But if thought be entangled in spatial *schemata*, it heeds not the original nexus, whether in an explicit form or in the inexplicit form of the ample and serene inspiration which has in that nexus its cause. This external thought does not understand Love and Death being put together except as an image more or less arbitrary, an idea well open to discussion, which should not be interpreted in its strict meaning, nor taken too seriously, a concept to be referred to episodes which in fact are sometimes met with, not as a *necessity* or truth, not as a moment of life, not in that inspired and true meaning which, in so far as it exists, is true of itself. The internal, free, and necessary *nexus* are lost.

In the poetic period not only the attribute, but every word, every moment of thought, gathers up, renews the whole. The subject is recalled in its concept in every word of the proposition, that is, it progressively takes fresh value, fills up of itself and governs every new moment. Thus reality at every point is drawn up from the unknown. The new expressive moment in its particular significance forms itself in the meaning of the whole, which in the new moment is not inferred but renewed: and myriads of *nexus*—resemblances, accords, unities, *ex principio*—form themselves. On the other hand, constructive thought loses the *nexus* or necessities of principle proper to thought in its integral originality: if we except the *nexus* belonging to formal logic, to a conception schematically material and spatial—a position of mere existences and of spatial and quantitative relations and ideal abstract identities. In other words, in constructive thought *nexus of inherence*

are comparatively prevalent, in poetic thought *nexus of essence*.

Constructive, practico-theoretical thought prefers a certain spatial schematism (as I have said) which aims at a formal, abstract objectivity, and spatialises and materialises the reality; reunites things extrinsically; collects several attributes as belonging to one and the same subject, but does not really *unite* them, except in the categories or necessities of space and time. It considers that which is *coexistence de facto*; but the *essential kinships* are lost or not discovered, or there is no wish to recognise and consider them in their value.

Thus in prose—taken in this its extreme aspect—the subject is the mere existent, to which is attributed rightly or wrongly every reality. But where the originality of thought is more living and not subordinate, the very actuality of thought is the subject. The originality of thought, as reality, as qualitative value and as existence, rises teeming with internal necessities and with truths, and throws into shade that other world of constructions, of externally connected notions.

The concrete reality, the reality which is activity, in prose—when viewed in this extreme and typical aspect—is lost; because in the subject of the proposition (for the most part the grammatical subject) that reality is only supposed, and really *inactive*. On the other hand, in the speaker or writer there is reality or concreteness of life, which however remains more or less extraneous and does not appear in the expression.

The more living, significant, and operative reality

leaps up at once at the first word, in the poetic period. Immediately we have the thought as active subject, existence and activity all together ; which thought does not deny itself, does not refer its reality to something else, to an *x*. On the other hand, the prose period almost conceals the subject-principle ; it conceals that which is an original value, a *value of realisation*. It tends to posit at once, at the beginning of the proposition, the supposed subject, even when it is still a name bereft of every quality, of all content, of every reality of thought (except and in so far as it is posited as existing). The reality, the principal part, the part of the subject, is attributed to a fictitious constant base, to an approximate, supposed, conventional, identity *de facto*, to a fictitious support which is not really known ; be it also an identity which we *must* suppose.

This failure to recognise (implicitly) the reality of the active principle, or *activity*, is the tendency peculiar to the prose period, and it is to this that the normal or general arrangement and order of the words in such periods conforms.

The worst degradation that poetic thought undergoes when translated into prose is that the intrinsic necessities and values of thought, instead of being recognised as real in themselves, are attributed to a mere existent, to a something postulated. This of course is not necessary in prose : but in a prose version there is an essential tendency in this direction.

What a difference there is between the *subject-activity*, and the *mere existent* ! The mere existent, the thing, the receiver of varied attributes, the postulated, abstract material identity, accepted but

not really known; on the other hand, a value which *in its essence* identifies, or strives to identify, itself with the real, and at the same time renews it. This is the true subject, and the profound reality, of art.

In poetry (regarded as a moment of life, full of immediateness in representing life, in living it afresh) the subject is a motive-value; which is a motive-value both of the reality represented and of the rhythmic period.

99

“Why does poetry come about?” it was asked. “How is this fact to be explained?” We ought rather to ask: “Why does prose come about? How is this fact to be explained?”

If we speak in prose, this is only because the discourse is not *living*, in the full sense of the word; because, or in so far as, the discourse is rather a practical means than a living thing. In other words, there is a tendency—a profound exigency—to lower it to a simple means, to adopt it almost like a utensil, bearing the mark of external working: nevertheless in every part of it song lies hidden.

Life, in so far as it is *truth*, is song. I speak, of course, of truth in a subjective sense, of life as a nucleus of original truths, that is, values and forms which realise themselves directly, whose realisation is a cause, and which are called truths because of their internal necessity, through which they are recognised as being infinitely identifiable.—The other aspect of life regards it as an effort to transcend *the actual* violently; as will, as *arbitrium*. Here also we cannot exclude song, originality, immediateness,

indeed in the last resort, on mature reflection, we shall find nothing else, if it be true that there is no *cause* without these attributes ; and even in the most arbitrary will, in the most barren artifice, we shall find the *innocence* of art. It is however not less true that the poverty and sterility of extrinsic action, and its powerlessness with regard to the very ends which it sometimes pretends to make its own, its violence and blindness, its negative attitude, in face of a different, rich, and profound content—all these things, in a comprehensive view and in an absolute sense, are apprehended as an inferior value and as an *evil*, and are characteristics peculiar to this second aspect and vocation of life.

100

In a building, the stone is a simple means ; in a poem, the most secondary note is nevertheless full of significance ; because of itself it becomes secondary, is as it were self-effacing, self-subordinating, because it still is itself an active subject.¹

Such is the nature of any internal process of formation. An immediateness which is never lost, however much reflection, however great the variety of perspective, there may be in a thought ; immediateness, or, in other words, the subjectivity of the

¹ In this example the terms of contrast are of course carried to an extreme, and the comparison must not be understood in a literal sense. In a building, even if we exclude the architect's vision, the stone itself, in the mason's hands, is not, strictly speaking, a simple means. Moreover, a given thing, though reduced to a simple means, provided it be perceived or even merely abstractly conceived, is still quality, subjectivity : only its subjectivity is made secondary, and almost fails to disclose its kinships.

so-called object. If there is a beginning of knowledge, the object is always quality, an original realisation of values and relations. It imposes itself through its own force, and the principle of its subordination is intrinsic to it. A thought which is not an actual thinking is not a thought at all, and cannot be an element of any theory, however abstract. A presentment means an active subject, an intuition (a spontaneous, original identification), or else it is not a presentment at all and has nothing sensible or psychic in it (though its 'traces' may be there). Only its subjectivity, that is, its reality not as condition, but as presentment, may be extrinsically subordinated and impoverished in various ways.

101

In pure mathematics the opposition between creation and construction disappears, having no longer any reason for existing, because in the mental presentment of a number there is no discrepancy between number as quality and number as a mere existent or a mere condition. Here quality and existent are not distinguished. The case is different in applied mathematics—in so far as their symbols and relations are not regarded as a necessity of thought, but from an external standpoint, and in view of extrinsic ends.

The abstract relation of condition—for instance, the relation of coexistence—does not here imply an external view, which fixes quality and suppresses it *qua* activity, and while reducing it to a rigid something, at the same time pretends to interpret it: because in numerical relations quality is at once

infinitely eliminated (except those qualities which strictly belong to the nature of those same relations) ; and we find instead, in its highest degree, the originality of this relation of condition.

I maintain that we do not find here that peculiar characteristic on account of which construction is distinguished from creation, or, better, is distinguished in creation—which is the more general term : because quality is therefrom excluded, *as far as possible*, by definition, and according to the nature of numbers, and not in a forced and ambiguous manner at the cost of truth.

That repressing and transcending of quality, which properly belongs to constructive thought, is not to be found in pure mathematics, except, so to say, as a dissent overcome or avoided, and quality (originality) is therein newly exalted through the eternal of number.

It is a great fallacy to deal with quality as with something which is not activity : but this does not occur in mathematics.

102

“ Paul is good and cannot have deceived me.”

According to the *logic of matter* (external, formal logic) the conjunction “ and ” may be interpreted as follows : Goodness and deceit are not compatible qualities, or rarely so. Or we may say : they cannot by definition be found together absolutely in one and the same subject, in one and the same relation. Further : it may be assumed that the attributes which meet together in one and the same individual are reciprocally united. Hence : “ Paul is good ;

therefore Paul (the same Paul) cannot have deceived me."

To have recourse to a quasi-spatial scheme (abstract identification, concept of coexistence, concept of condition, concept of a purely relative gradation) is justifiable, indeed is clearly necessary, with regard to a certain order of problems ; but with regard to other problems it means exteriority and non-comprehension, darkness, barbarism.

On the other hand, according to the *logic of quality*, it is the intimate connection between goodness and good faith, or between goodness and deception, that finds its interpretation ; and this comes about through a more or less profound notion of activity. The conceptions through which this connection is rendered intelligible are those of individuation, of universality, of originality, and of conditionality. (This last concept of external condition is however not understood as the *only* concept, such as is peculiar to the logic of matter.)

Certainly these concepts need not be explicit. It is enough if there be a lively sense of activity, indeed activity alone is sufficient to make the logic of quality operative. But the sense of feeling ourselves in face of a *logic* gradually becomes more explicit the more we feel an explicit—and lively—consciousness of being in face of a *nexus* which has an intimate necessity of its own, an originality, an *incorruptibility*—which specially belongs to that which is original ; in face of a *nexus* which is a cause, not a mere derivative ; when we recognise a reality of principles constitutive of practical as well as of theoretical activity.

103

The discovery of the same principles as constitutive both of the expressive reality—scientific and artistic—and of practical and ethical activity ought to lead us to think of a reality of principles. I do not of course understand these principles as mere interpretative concepts, nor as necessities in a naturalistic sense. But inasmuch as it is not easy to comprehend without ambiguity the concept expressed, and because the powerful yet subtle reality of principles always requires to be brought back afresh to the mind, I shall again give some examples.

Let us take the proposition : *The individual form does not exalt itself except by the effacement of its particularity.* This is true as well in theoretical as in practical and ethical activity.¹

I ask in passing : Why do poets and writers express this and other similar truths,² while books of psychology omit them ? Through defective and erroneous conceptions, and for no other reason : as psychological study advances, these truths will come to be fully recognised in scientific thought. We are dealing here with truths that are not to be taken lightly. This at least ought to be recognised, and by doing so, we should already be, so to say, within

¹ Similarly in an algebraic formula ; in a geometrical figure ; in a statue, where the material is not intended for display, where indeed we forget whether it is a piece of sculpture or another form of art ; as well as in some humble creature, unmindful of himself, not through defect, but through depth and intensity of value. See *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 107, 108. But cf. note 79.

² Cf. for instance, André Suarès, *Sur la Vie*, vol. ii., nouvelle édition, p. 8 : " Le moi ne s'accomplit que dans l'anéantissement."

sight of an immense reality, of a substantial and profound logic.

Hence it is that the poet understands, when he thinks or writes his verses, that *the vocation of making everything serve oneself* and *the vocation of making a gift of oneself* are equally original values, principles of infinite realisation, of infinite interpretation, of infinite kinships in the facts of consciousness and of life in general. Hence he is borne up into a novelty-necessity, which, because of its value and its universality, is not only a fact, but a consciousness and knowledge of the *logos*, in its deepest meaning, in its (I would say) inalienable essence ; he is taken up into a moment of life which is not only something real, but true, a reality in conformity with a profound and original nature of its own.

Another example : a thought is intelligible to us, that is, our thought is identified with it, through an identity of principle—through an internal necessity, an *eternity* of values and forms—and this *identity of principle* not only conditions such unity or synthesis (strictly speaking, the word “conditions” does not express only a part ; it is rather untrue), but it is its reality, its light, its value, its power. And every thought in its vast and varied unity, every moment of thought as a unity of several moments, every simplicity of thought realises the same original and infinitely necessary identity. Now it is not difficult to understand that this very concept, essentially the same reality, is manifested, when with full understanding we remember the saying : “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (because, if there be but a

glimmer of consent or reciprocal intelligence, in order that this consent may occur, it is necessary that we become implicitly conscious of activity as a principle). —In the practical and moral field the same truths are evidenced, so to say, more massively. In theoretical expression they lend themselves to closer study, which is freed from possible misunderstandings and defended against crude but apparently flattering interpretations.

*Identity de facto, Conventional Identity,
and Essential Identity*

104

There may be several concepts of identity, very different from one another : an *identity de facto*, a *conventional identity*, and an identity which is *identification in an intrinsic necessity* of values and forms. The latter is the only real one ; it is the operative principle in all deepening and developing of thought, and, as I think probable, in every organic unity.

Identity de facto is postulated, approximate, practically effective. But its reality, strictly speaking, is elusive. If everything unceasingly changes place (a thing which perhaps is not without importance with regard to its very substance) and is transformed ; if every atom is made up of electrons in vortiginous motion, and similarly the molecule of atoms,—how is it possible to individuate an element as identical with itself in two successive moments? If, moreover, we simply affirm the identity of a thing with itself

(at one and the same moment), it seems to me that we only affirm the identity of our thought with itself in more than one moment, and thereby that eternity, or intrinsic necessity, that recognising, that identifying, which is the supreme principle of mental activity (and which is a principle of *essential* identity).¹—“Objective” or *de facto* identity occurs as a favourite postulate of the mechanical conception of reality : inasmuch as this conception only finds rationality in an effacement of every difference between one thing and another, in an equation without residuum between antecedents and consequents—the change and the differences being explained by annulling them.

Next there is a “conventional” or fictitious identity ; a *positing* of an identity ; a fixing and retaining in several moments and several references a supposed reality, as identical with itself and at the same time different in different references and conditions. This is a principle of constructive thought. In combining elements, which, as far as possible, are given, in the processes of an abstract and formal logic, and, generally speaking, when, in developing the thought, an external order or discipline prevails, the principle of constructive thought is precisely that of positing the *identity* as a point on which the reasoning turns, that is, as a point identical with itself amid the diversity of references, for instance, in the different moments of deduction : as it were, a privileged point chosen and defended by our thought.

Here identification is supposed to have its cause in convention, or in a volitional act in the widest sense,

¹ Cf. note 83.

in an act characterised by extrinsicality, which is, if I may so say, a positing, not a making. In this sense, therefore, *identification* is very different from that principle of recognising, and of knowing, which is the realisation of a common intimate nature. For instance, we find Bosanquet saying (*Logic*, vol. i. p. 51): "... mere identification is a very barren kind of signification, since there is hardly a single attribute of actual content as distinguished from mere external relations that is necessarily conveyed by it." This is to identify a person or a thing so as to be able to recognise them, by the simplest means, for instance, through a number or by referring to a spatial relation (e.g., "that on the right") or to some other extrinsic datum. It is clear that here the process or act of identification is represented as something quite different from that identification which is a self-identifying, a becoming one, a re-making, a knowing. Here identification means the act of identifying, of establishing the identity of a person or object from a general and not necessarily intimate point of view; for instance, when we appoint a given name as a fixed symbol for a given object. Nevertheless, in this "conventional" identity there is an original value, a value of universality, through which that identity is not so remote as it might seem from the concept of an identity which is a becoming one with new individuals and experiences, and at the same time a taking consciousness of the intrinsic or eternal of activity, and which is essentially the very principle of charity and of truth.

A given element is conceived as the same in infinite relations. Here *fixity* takes the place of *eternity*:

only, as I have said, the two concepts run into one another. The "conventional" identity (this is how, for instance, Bosanquet names such identity) is made¹ a centre of logical systems of inestimable value, because it is, so to say, the symbol of an original value—for which in reality this term, "conventional" identity, is ill suited—and it stands to represent, or rather (as it seems to me) to conceal, the universal. The predominating part which also in the works of these philosophers is attributed, not to thought, but to a control over thought, which is—as I hold—relatively secondary, has induced them to bring into special prominence the universal in the form of a fictitious *positing* of a something infinitely identical with itself in relations infinitely different. But the recognition of the value of this concept as a principle of unity of thought, as a principle of interpreting reality, and the recognition that it is everywhere, and also in instinctive forms of activity, and not only in some forms of discursive thought, shows that in fact identity is regarded by these authors as a concept which is not completely and happily translatable into the concept of a rigid and conventional identity.

If the 'point of identity' may have infinite relations; if, in a man's thought, it defies limitless space and time, this does not come about through convention, or purpose, or any extrinsic operation! This is on the contrary the realisation of the infinite identical, or eternal, of activity, that is, an original value and motive: and only on account of this its character is it operative everywhere. Every *identity*

¹ By Bradley and Bosanquet.

has in fact no reality except as a unity of consciousness, as a coherence, a continuity in consciousness, therefore, at the same time, as an identification in the necessity, or *eternity*, of principles. Also in conceptualising through abstraction, in positing conventional identities, which are formal and absolute, we find in any given case an identity which only for this reason is a principle of interpreting reality, and the principle of a thought's unity or simplicity, namely, because it is not only "conventional," but still activity, category, universality. It is not in convention, but in an original value, that even a "conventional" identity finds its force. The infinite identical—formal, absolute in its relativity—of any conventional, or *posited*, abstractly established relation is a notion, a value, a *cause*, which no effort of will and no convention could give us. No convention and no act of will could give us the realisation of a characteristic, different and at the same time identical in different relations, in the simplicity of a thought.—"This stone has a certain weight and volume." I admit an identity *de facto* between that which weighs and that which occupies the space ; I posit an x identical in the two relations ; and I decide that the word "stone" and that object are one. But my idea of the identity of the stone in several relations is not due to convention. Its real cause is not found in convention, but in the fact that it is impossible to think of an object, or a quality, or a datum, or a number, without conceiving it in the originality-necessity of its constitutive 'form,' without—thereby—universalising it. Furthermore, this universality must not be understood as a formal identity—which

is just what we are led to think, if convention be posited as its basis, or if too great importance is attached to the conception of convention or to anything similar. Its cause, its essence is an originality the significance of which has, in part, escaped the notice of these authors. A formal and absolute identity is a secondary concept which there is a tendency to overestimate. Thus, for instance, it is a mistake to say that names are given *to identify the object*. This may frequently occur ; but the desire to extend the volitional process (or a less explicit form of it) to cases in general, where a name or a mark is attributed or recognised, seems to me a desperate expedient to which recourse is had in the absence of a clearer notion of the originality of thought. Names are not solely given in order to identify, that is, to distinguish, the object ; their cause is rather a *more spontaneous and necessary* activity, which is expression, and through which every element is transformed into a principle of infinite realisation : into a something which is infinitely identical and different ; but not in a schematic and abstract sense, because the identity is always realised, and, as it were, regained, in and through the intrinsic nature of thought, as a reason of recognition which renews itself and varies endlessly and absolutely. In this respect names cannot be essentially distinguished from other marks or qualities by which we recognise an object, and from our whole vision or perception of the object.

Whatever be the meaning of that which is understood by "conventional" identity, and of the concept of universality implicit in that identity (according to

Bradley and Bosanquet), it is none the less true that, taken by itself, for that which it obviously means, the *positing* of a formal, absolute, abstract, "conventional" identity plays only a secondary, subsidiary part in the development of thought : and it is wrong to attribute to it the chief part. On the other hand, if this conventional process be considered as a symbol, and on the understanding that its meaning ought to be extended as far as possible, we should all the more avoid this mode of representing the reality, because of the ambiguity which it implies. The exchanging of the formal act abstractly selective, voluntary, arbitrary, fictitious, for the principle of identity which is really factitive, is a pitfall which we cannot too carefully guard against ; because we must remember that such a view disfigures or wholly disregards the principle of *essential* identity, without which the nature or essence of thought disappears.

For there is an infinite *necessity* proper to thought in each of its moments ; and this is original, not conventional. There is an essential identity where the cause or principle lies in a self-revealing and self-realising of an identity (or 'infinite necessity,' or 'intrinsicity') of activity in its value and *schemata* : and this self-revealing and self-realising of an identical essence is an active principle in logic, in art, in practical and ethical life (as I think I have proved directly and indirectly in a great number of instances, and especially in my *Principii di Etica*). Such is essentially the principle of *truth* and of *love* : a principle of identification in the eternal, an identity which discovers itself, increases and grows deeper in every particular in which it realises itself, nor can it

be realised except by discovering the intrinsic or eternal of activity, nor is it realised through any other greater end or value, except through the immediate value of this discovery, that is, of an inexhaustible self-realisation and self-revelation.¹

105

The Self-realisation of an 'Essential' Identity, as Cause in the Development of Thought

True knowledge, intimate knowledge, proceeds by universals or essentials and not by generalisations.²

Artistic ideation, also, in this case provides us with the most obvious instance, which acquires all the more significance because of the evidently false interpretations which have been applied to ideation itself. For art critics and historians, especially in the past, have spoken of ideas and types *as abstract*, almost as if ideas were necessarily *abstractions*, the result of a process extrinsically selective, which retains some elements and excludes others by abstraction or omission; and it is because of this error or tendency that the thought of critics and artists, verbally expressed, and also the expressions of ordinary

¹ "Self-realisation" and "self-revelation" are here used to indicate one and the same thing. The same concept of a realisation-revelation may be expressed in a single word by the term: "self-forming," as when we say, for instance, that *a presentment forms itself*; also by the term "expression."

² In other words, cognitive activity, as a rule, does not proceed by generalisations, which have no intrinsic value, and whose importance only depends on their application; but it proceeds by a conceptualisation, which is suggested, in the first place, by the immediate value of whatever is felt as an intimate character of activity—and therefore assumed as essential and (often with new implications) universal. Cf. *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 19, 62-64, 110, 115, *Essay ad fin.*, §§ 1, 10, 15.

language, are often rendered inadequate and false.

Each one of us, and much more an artist, perceives, not man in general, but man in his essence. Our presentment is not the abstract type of man, and assuredly not the average type, nor a complex of characteristics chosen and put together as being more remarkable, nor yet a complex of characteristics where what is irrelevant is omitted. On the contrary, we have in mind a *conceptual, essential* intuition, which is a thought that is awakened in every particular of the object (man and men) in which it has succeeded in forming itself, by regaining its *identity* more or less profoundly, and which, by *essentially* renewing its past moments, realises itself as *one*, identical with itself. Thought awakes in every particular in proportion as it therein discovers *itself and the eternal*, that is, according as it can in that particular materiate itself more or less, take body and form, renewing and finding itself again through intrinsic (*eternal*) necessities of values and *schemata*.

This takes place originally, and not by means of an intentional extrinsic process. It is only thus that the activity of thought can penetrate so far into details, forming itself in the latter; only thus can the details that seem less prominent affect the character of the whole.

An essential identity—not conventional, not formal, not a point of reference supposed or constructed as identical—which unites different things through an *intrinsic* (in other words, an internal and infinitely original) necessity, that is, the discovery,

the self-revealing, self-realising, of this identity, of this internal necessity of values and *schemata*,—this is the operative principle in the birth and development of thought. A proceeding through universals or essentials, the discovering of that which is essential, *ever more* essential, the uniting in essential qualities or characters or principles, a deepening of the concept or essence—this is a value and a motive, this is a principle of development.

Understood in this meaning (nor do I think that it can have any other ; and I hope I shall be pardoned for using the term—which however seems to me the most adequate), so understood, *essentialising* is a passion for light, a power of light, which moves and illuminates writer and artist. When in his early years he who haply has received from the gods the gift of a keen sensibility and the vocation of understanding the reality, not abstractly, but by interpreting it in intimate and original qualities ; when, owing to this vocation of his, amid opposition and difficulties, he perseveres in his studies and researches, with wonderful fervour, and cannot believe that the world will not sooner or later awaken to a new transparency and truth ; until at last, bereft of all hope, after indescribable distress, his thought is extinguished, or takes other directions, unmindful of its value, or until (as may sometimes happen) he rests on a recognition accorded him for other qualities associated with his merit and true glory : that which moves him, which only can move him, is *a deepening, an essentialising*, a rendering different things transparent in a simplicity which is the characteristic of mind ; in an intrinsic necessity inherent in things, and above

all in the facts of consciousness in and for themselves, which all the more reveal their kinships and are comprehended, in proportion as we discover the *principle* in its original modes and in the wealth of its specifications.

The deepening or *essentialising* of thought is the principle of development of individual thought, and of a whole literary or artistic period, as well as of practical life : and the history of literature may be studied from the point of view of this fruitful principle, of this power of light (the expression is not to be understood as a metaphor), which power is the moving force, the cause.

106

But—if it is improbable that a different and unknown nature be united with manifestations to all appearance similar—as far as, in my opinion, we may conjecture, organic life, no less than intellectual life—*which is a moment of organic life*—is an infinite conceptualising : the term “conceptualising” being understood as an *essentialising*, an identifying or uniting in the values of life, in so far as they are intrinsic to life itself, that is, eternal, self-necessary, original, infinitely original.

Some one may say that this is anthropomorphism. It should rather be called biomorphism (if a charge is to be made). The accusation arises from a superficial way of thinking on the part of those who have always combined notions only after the manner of elements, and failed to appreciate an intimate progress in knowing. Whoever views man from a

less external standpoint gains the conviction in many ways that he is a student of life in general, not of mankind exclusively. *That life and its characteristics belong exclusively to the human race ; that the principles of discursive thought are proper to discursive thought alone—these are hypotheses which such a one rather regards as risky, arbitrary, and unreliable.*

107

“ Art is not imitation : its function is to represent things in their essential characteristics ” (Taine). But, if such be the end and value of art, we find the essential characteristics of things duly described in scientific books, and also, from another point of view, in commercial notices. What we ought to see in a work of art is the reality of thought : not the fact of the reproduction of the essential characteristics of the thing or the object represented (this in itself does not in the least contain the value of art).

But the ambiguity arises from the fact that the more intensely and profoundly thought penetrates the object, the more it *unites* the latter in and through qualities which are at once qualities of the thing and of thought itself. Thought is a characterising or essentialising activity : it unites by revealing a quality or concept which is common to several realisations, because original, self-necessary, essential (that is, pertaining to the essence of thought, to its original, non-ephemeral nature). Thus in the concept of *being*¹ several existences are united, are

¹ There is something necessarily abstract in these words, because in reality, in the concreteness of the act, there is but one concept. (See *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 113, 114.)

comprehended, are intelligible together. In the affirmation of *being*, as something which is not exhausted in the affirmation itself, different values and forms of universality may reveal their kinship, while they are conceived in a single thought. In the concept of *space*, several spaces are identified in only one. In the concept of *birth* we approach the purity, virginity, and freshness of a flower and of a child. And the more thought *essentialises* or *universalises*, that is, unites the whole in every particular, by realising the latter *in its quality*—which is an original value and therefore an universal of thought—the more a thought has reality. This is the reality which is essential to art, but evidently it is not the same thing as the attainment of the aim of finding out the essential characteristics *of the object*. If the intimate unity and the strong character of the vision reflect the qualities which are more largely diffused, or dominant, and peculiar, and typical, in the object, according to a common view, or to that of the artist himself, this fact must be regarded almost as a consequence of the intense presence and development of thought in that particular object, not as the final cause and the value of the work of art.

108

On the term “*essential*,” as compared with the terms “*intrinsic*” (of activity), “*original*,” “*self-necessary*,” “*universal*,” “*eternal*.”¹ The *essential* quality, or value, of activity means the same thing as the *intrinsic*

¹ Cf. *Intelligence in Expression*, §§ 54, 68, 69.

(*original*, etc.) quality, or value, of activity. Nevertheless "essential" also implies another concept, has its own proper meaning or shade of meaning. In this term the idea of a tendency, or effort or vocation, the idea of the comparative, of the *more essential*, is particularly vivid and could not be easily excluded: the idea, that is, of an identity of principle which we find again through particularities and specifications *more* different, *more* developed and *richer*, and in a *vaster* transparency, because its reason, or intelligibility, is inherent in the intimate nature of being. The self-revealing of something as *essential* is a principle of choice and of development, an intimate principle, effective of the choice which lies in every act of thought and of life—not of the choice which is an abstract process, but of the choice which is a demand for, and realisation of, a higher moment of mental and moral health, in the search which the subject or activity makes for itself in ever new conditions. "Essential" implies in this sense the concept of "profound," or better, the concept of "feeling after depth," that is, the concept of "more profound"; where the word "more" is not quantitative, but qualitative, and expresses the vocation of life towards its realisation and development: that is, *value as a cause; being*, which is an intimate exigency, and affirmation, and in which the universal represents the higher value.

On the term "depth." Generally we have a vague and confused idea of "depth"—in the sense of depth of insight or feeling—and, in order to better explain this term, we cling to material images, and lose its meaning. "Depth," if we do not use this word in

a material or spatial sense, means a perceiving of quality, rather than of mere detail ; a perceiving of *essence*—that is, of a value (or of a relation) in so far as it is intrinsic to thought, original, self-necessary, at once a value (or a relation) and a *principle*—rather than an apprehension of mere happenings (no matter how far we trace their antecedent and their conditions) ; a perceiving of the originality-necessity of a relation, rather than of mere matter of fact ; of humanity and life in individuals, rather than of mere individuals ; of a rich and simple, entire moment of life, rather than of abstract rules and aspects. Here, in the very act of passing, so to say, from mere existence to that which is at once a *being* and an *essence*, lies, I wish to state again, a value of universality, kindred with moral values, and a principle of choice and of development immanent in artistic thought, and in mental activity in general ; in fact, a principle which is one with the very spontaneity of thought. On the other hand, people who hardly suspect an originality-necessity in the lights and shades of our life—and grow impatient in reading these pages,—and who are inclined to value only constructive thought, conceive “ depth ” in analogy with material depth ; in this sense they may speak of finding the laws and methods for mastering a great number of phaenomena—which remain unknown to a view that in fact is not superficial, but certainly unprovided with instruments and notions necessary in a given research. Yet, I repeat, subjective universality is present also in constructive thought, and is the real leaven of its generalisations and discoveries.

Intimate Knowledge and Constructive Knowledge

109

To make a radical opposition between reason on the one hand and value on the other, between an intelligible and a sensible world, and especially to reserve the term "*thought*" for that which is called an *intelligible system or reality*, in contradistinction to the sensible reality, and consequently to depreciate the latter, to be ignorant of, or not to recognise its value :— this attitude corresponds to a one-sided view, and in general reflects impoverished thought, to which the vital principles of being and of knowledge do not contribute ; inasmuch as such principles do not renew themselves in the forms of explicit discursive thought, but abandon the latter to an external and impotent ratiocinating activity and to all the sophisms with which human pettiness is satisfied.

Undoubtedly a merely quantitative, inferred knowledge may be regarded as radically distinct from sensible knowledge. Our sensibility, as an instrument of knowing the datum, seeks with an effort, which has something heroic in it, to shuffle off its very self and to interpret the world by a single system which it does not touch, which lies remote from it, from thought, and even (if that were possible) from the forms of abstractly objective thought.—But the category of exteriority or conditionality—abstractly objective thought or understanding—cannot arrogate to itself alone the name of thought, nor is it even that which in thought has most reality, value, and importance.

110

Sensible knowledge, directed to the interpretation of physical nature, may give rise to an ingenuous "qualitative realism": but if we consider the activity of thought *qua* knowledge of itself, and not only as an instrument for knowing the datum, we must admit that sense is activity and that sense is a beginning of knowledge, and undistinguishable (fundamentally) from what is value, consciousness, thought, and reveals activity in the necessity or eternity of its values.

No one thinks of denying an opposition, a primordial, yet ever new, struggle between a higher, more luminous, more objective sense, and on the other hand a sense which is cloudy and ephemeral. But this opposition shows itself through gradual differences, where what is cloudy is so in comparison with a higher demand, a new exigency of comprehension, a freer and more conscious form of life; through infinite gradations of intensity, full of surprises, where that which is defined as the ephemeral sense sometimes reveals an immanent value, expresses the eternal, and this not because it is added from without. And in another respect it should be borne in mind that the most radical and essential opposition is not between sensibility, nor even sensuality, on the one hand, and thought, in the highest acceptation of this word, on the other, but rather between the *cognitive attitude* (even in lower forms) and the *practical transcendent attitude*. Practical utilitarianism equally with practico-ethical utilitarianism is opposed both to ephemeral sensuality and to the love of knowledge

in its highest forms, and this incompatibility is animated by profound repugnance and fierce hatred. In sense, in feeling, in knowledge there is a delay intolerable to practical, and practico-ethical, mentality. There is an end-value in itself, an eternity in the act, or at least a *presence*, which practical, or practico-ethical, mentality does not understand.

III

It may well be asked from what presentment, or from what possible impression of the senses, truth as a category or active principle can be excluded. Any sensuous impression, whatever it be, is predicated of the *reality*—even in dreams, indeed with more certitude in the latter. An idea or equally an impression of the senses cannot remain suspended, and fail to be implicitly predicated as real, or as relatively unreal. It seems that judgment, *in principio*, even in a rudimentary form, can never be excluded from the activity of consciousness. Or at least those who uphold the existence of such an impaired mental activity ought to defend or justify their thesis.

And they might be asked to explain, for instance, what is the difference which they see—a difference not gradual, but of principle—between the feeling cold (a simple sensation) and the recognising that it is cold (a judgment); between the feeling cold and going into the sun *because it is cold*, and thinking that it is cold and saying: “It is cold,” and: “The temperature is low.”

But, in a sensation, a judgment as to its reality is not only implicit: this act of judgment, which is nothing else than a *value*, constitutes the sensation.

It is the non-ephemeral, the non-arbitrary, the self-necessary, the eternal of the sensation. "But when I say that a sensation is *true*, do I not pass into quite another point of view, unsuspected in the sensation?" Not so, in my opinion. I develop, make more explicit, a value, or rather, a value renews itself, renders itself more explicit, which value, however, was in sensation *in principio* (that is, in another form, but essentially the same). Our philosophic thought does not bring much change into mental life. Truth—exigency of truth, of absoluteness; realisation of the intrinsic of activity—exists in the lower forms, I imagine, almost as much as in man.

112

Our sensibility is thought. It uplifts itself to know intimately the highest values, and these are this same sensibility. This is why it happens that our senses are harmoniously borne up to express the highest concepts, as properly belonging to them, without the slightest leap. Truth, charity, joy, light are in Dante's *Paradiso* an identical *reality of thought*. To me it seems neither conceivable nor possible that light should be only a *means* of expression; nor that this unity could be otherwise explained than by an essential identity. This light, this joy, this feast of charity are mingled together in their necessity and originality, which are *essentially* the same in all these forms.¹

¹ The same principle is realised in the light which is conditioned by the luminiferous rays, and in the light which is the perceivable content of a word of truth. Reason, and light—*qua* sensation, not *qua* condition of sensation—are, or may be constituted of, one and the same psychic content: if it be true that light is always, and particularly in a given case (since it may

The senses are held to be deceptive, as being formed for practical ends, and having nothing to do with truth. Thus philosophy has strayed from every path of truth. In addition to a finality which they serve and of which they seem to be ignorant, the senses possess an internal finality which contains the principle of higher finalities and is in harmony with them. There is in the senses, as I maintain, an informing principle, which may be called "pleasure," not pleasure viewed as an extrinsic end, but as a value of realisation.—This use of the word "pleasure" to express the idea of pleasure as a cause was very common in the fourteenth century. I here quote some verses which raise this term to a high value, and illustrate those kinships of meaning to which I have called attention. ". . . Because the pleasure of her loveliness, withdrawn from out our view, became a beauty spiritual and great, which through heaven spreads a light of love, that greets the angels, and makes their lofty, subtile intellect marvel ; so gracious it appears." ¹

It may be objected that pleasure is one thing, the senses quite another. The latter are widely dissimilar, heterogeneous. How are we to explain their

express, and *be*, predominantly other values of activity), a becoming conscious of activity as a necessity or as an infinite ; this being a definition which may also be applied to reason. See notes 7, 13-15.

¹
Perchè 'l piacere de la sua beltate,
Partendo sè da la nostra veduta,
Divenne spirital bellezza grande,
Che per lo cielo spande
Luce d'amor, che li angeli saluta,
E lo intelletto loro alto, sottile
Face maravigliar, sì v'è gentile.

DANTE, *Vita Nuova*, Canzone iv.

diversity ? How is it intelligible ? In reality a more external, common way of thinking tends to distinguish and separate the different senses too much, also for the reason that attention is turned to their organs, which are more plainly localised. But undoubtedly an obscure problem is presented by their particularity, which thought does not always penetrate—in the way that it penetrates, that is, interprets, different and opposing feelings.

Only by what is here said I do not mean to regard as solved the problem of a something cloudy in sensation. Have we here to do with forms historically remote from us ? Remote from our consciousness which is *more ours* ? Less intelligible because not *identified* in the field of the clearest intelligibility, in the richest and most *active* centre of our consciousness ?

Nor is it intended to overlook the fact that in sensation we are *more passive* or *less active* than, for instance, in remembering. In sensation we depend on the stimulus as on something extraneous to our *arbitrium*, or to our passion, or to the natural course of our thoughts. But for the sake of well-defined distinctions, and because people evidently do not think that the search after truth can have any other content ; and because no proper consideration is given to the reality of sensation as activity, attention being given chiefly to the conditions ; and because on the other hand it is not clearly recognised that, if in sensation there is the external or internal stimulus, there are nevertheless also in memory, and to speak more generally, in thought, adequate physiological conditions, which on account of their necessity must

be regarded as analogous to the stimulus, inasmuch as they are essential to the existence of every presentment¹: consequently there is a general tendency to attach too much importance to this basis of distinction. There is no abrupt transition at the point where memory takes the place of a sensation. A transition, a distinction exists: but there is also a continuity, which requires explanation, and which in fact points to the psychic reality common both to sensation and memory.

113

Images of odours are rare in the verses of Petrarca, whose poetry is particularly transparent and essential, expressing, as it does, modes of mind in their subtile and vast significance. The different senses do not share alike in poetry. And to use an aphorism, which however deserves consideration, it may be said that poetry is the measure of their intelligibility.

114

The same error, through which it is maintained that knowledge of life is not real knowledge, and that on the other hand life escapes our intelligence in its clearer and fuller application, is responsible for the assertion that the knowledge acquired through notions of ends and values is not scientific. But when is the notion of value (internal finality) ever excluded from knowledge?

The knowledge of life wholly consists of notions of development, of internal finality and value. But such is the knowledge of every reality of thought.

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay *ad fin.*

Knowing in itself is a self-realising of values and forms ; it is *essential identification* ; it is value. *Being*, at least the being of activity, of a content of consciousness, is internal finality, value.

According to this criterion we ought to exclude from true science the knowledge of the activity of thought, of that reality which alone we are capable of knowing intimately.

Strictly speaking, no reality can be conceived except through the self-realising of notions of value, of internal finality : inasmuch as the positing of being, of mere existence, is still a necessity of thought, and, in so far as it is so, an original principle, a something active ; a value.

Undoubtedly the problem of the possibility of knowing the datum implies problems other than that of the *originality*, or *internal finality* or *value*, of a given notion. This, however, does not gainsay the fact that intimate knowledge always comes about through the self-realising of notion-values, and that the distinction, as commonly posited, between logical and axiological problems is fictitious, external, and full of error.

The starting-point of the error, or one of its fundamental aspects, lies in identifying value and extrinsic finality, while finality is conceived of only as extrinsic ; that is, in the non-recognition of that *internal finality* which is (as I hold) one and the same thing as the *originality* of thought.

115

Can we know the *stimulus*—the condition, external nature ?

In this connection I have to say in the first place that, in my opinion, there is a knowledge through identification, a knowledge through reaction, and a knowledge through supposition (*necessary* supposition).

Every object may be known simultaneously through identification, through reaction, and through supposition. For instance, the colour red in one of Titian's pictures may be known (1) through identification: by identifying ourselves with Titian's thought, of which the given colour is the expression (and this colour may appear quite other than the red which it—the given colour—might have when taken apart from the vision). (2) Through reaction. The unique and unambiguous reality of the thought expressed in that colour becomes of secondary importance. Here the red is not so much the expression of a given thought as the general reaction to given material conditions (this reaction being better explained by starting from historical and spiritual reasons than from physiological conditions). (3) Through supposition: the same colour, not as a moment of consciousness, but in its material, physical conditions: such as are the luminiferous rays, the adaptation of the organ of sight, the conditions on the painted canvas, in the brain, in the nervous system, at the given moment.—The given red consists of all these things together: (1) vision, (2) quality of the material, element of possible visions, (3) physical conditions.

As *vision* and as *quality* it is intelligible. It is known just as we know the realisation, or want of realisation, of synthesis; as we know light or darkness, confidence or deceit, liberty, birth, the death

which is a losing of our more particular, exclusive and narrow nature, and the death which is a nullity ; as we know reason, peace, pleasure, struggle, and pain.

As a condition and a system of conditions can it be known ? Can it be resolved into intelligible relations (according to a mechanical conception) of mere existences and conditions ? And if it were so resolved, would it be known ? Would it be, as some maintain, "intelligible," "rational" ?—This "intelligibility" or "rationality" has undoubtedly a value : but it is not intimate, profound, essential knowledge, to say nothing of its being (as has been asserted) the only true rationality and intelligibility. It is not the intelligibility or rationality which is full and entire, the highest and most arduous, true in a non-abstract manner. Intimate knowledge includes the problems of the former, but the former is contrariwise unacquainted with, or else ignores, the knowing which is *a making in the integrity of thought*.

Can we know intimately external nature, matter, as exteriority ? Will it ever be possible to do so ? Assuredly, even if we admit that matter is *of the same nature as activity*, and is originality, and can be known through identification, that is to say, intimately, nevertheless its external aspect could not be *known*. Its external aspect we know by reaction, and by necessary supposition abstractly : but we cannot know, and there would be probably no meaning in knowing—except by reaction, or abstractly—e.g., the external aspect of my hand as it writes. "Exteriority," "resistance" at once imply a relation with something other than the subject. The material or external aspect of a thing cannot be known inti-

mately, by identification. Even supposing this thing to be ourselves, supposing that we were a mental and material minimum, that we were an act of will, and that this act of will of itself (and without forming itself of other material elements) took bodily shape, possessed the attributes of resistance and extension, and opposed itself to another act of will, to another reality : in spite of all this we could not *know* its exteriority.

116

Let us take another example. Suppose some one is climbing up a steep ascent and falls. His will or desire not to fall he knows intimately, and also the pain caused by his accident. The weight of his body he knows by reaction. He further knows the exact weight of his body through abstract notions, which are at once objective and subjective. And in so far as these notions (numerical relations, relation of condition, causality as a principle of co-ordination of phaenomena, existence, coexistence, succession)—in so far as these our notions, although objective, do not absolutely constitute the physical reality, which is to be faced and known, he knows the exact weight of his body constructively—this term expressing also other characteristics of such knowing.

117

The distinction between knowledge by reaction and knowledge by identification is not of an absolute nature. Our sensible interpretation of the physical reality (knowledge by reaction) may be intimate knowledge (by identification) of the values and

principles of the activity of thought, through which this physical reality is interpreted. On the other hand, there is no knowledge of the values and principles of spiritual activity which is not a self-realising in some material, and which hence does not realise itself in connection with what, in a broad sense, may still be called stimulus,¹ nor imply an interpretation of the physical reality.² It is only when sensible knowledge is chiefly directed to the interpretation of the physical reality³ that it has a character of approximation and relativity, and this is why the term "sensible knowledge" is used in a depreciatory sense. But in truth, sensible knowledge must be ascribed not only to one who perceives the object, for instance, red, warm, resistant, small, but also to the painter, for whom colours and other qualities become expression in the highest sense and full intelligibility. On the other hand, every impression of the senses, not only of the painter's, is a beginning of true knowledge, not of the datum but of the mental *primum*. And if qualitative and valuative knowledge must be called "sensible knowledge" in a depreciatory sense, or intimate, essential knowledge, this depends more than on anything else on the end to which our sensibility is directed and on the practical or cognitive spirit, which in divers ways informs every particular act or moment of thought (no matter to what science or art or practice it may be nominally ascribed) according to the most profound vocation of each person.

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay *ad fin.*, §§ 5 and 12.

² See *op. cit.*, Essay *ad fin.*, §§ 6-8.

³ In this case, sensible knowledge has to be regarded as a form of constructive, external knowledge.

But constructive knowledge itself, if we take no account of its end, which is to transcend itself, if regard be had to its *reality of thought*, is still a making and a refinding of itself, an immediate and intimate knowledge. Thus mathematics in themselves are intimate knowledge, not of numbers, but of relations (number ought still perhaps to be considered as an abstraction, a reference to something other than thought, a supposition). It is obvious that thus—if we consider mathematics in themselves and disregard their application—the character of constructive or indirect knowledge is lost : nevertheless this shows that this character is not everything in constructive knowledge itself. In brief, the immediate (original, qualitative, valuative) knowledge of values, and of relations or abstractively objective necessities, is always the primal substance, the principle of knowing : but the predominance of an extrinsic end, and on the other hand the lack of a stronger cognitive spirit, may be reasons which prevent the realisation of immediate knowledge except in a weakened form, that is, except—as it is in fact disavowed as knowledge—it is degraded into provisional, and *in themselves insignificant*, sensuous impressions, or else into formulae which are rigorous, yet conceived as provisional and only “ useful.”

118

“ The thing in itself.” If by the conception which this phrase represents it is meant that the reality is not accessible to us, because nothing can be known except through our presentments ; that appearance-forms, phaenomena, experience, and our presentments

are not the reality : then in this conception there lies hid a point of view which is wholly mistaken. The error lies in our not bearing in mind that *seeing*, and, more generally speaking, *expression*, and presumably every *individuation*, is *activity*, is the eternal, a profound reality, an inexhaustible ground for ever-deepening research.

By "the thing in itself" we may understand *matter* in its proper nature to us unknowable through identification : on the supposition that matter does not conceal an originality and activity which is the same as ours. On this hypothesis matter will never be known intimately, but only by relation ; it will always be a "thing in itself," but not that x whose significance is so great, so incomparable, and where the problem involved is so harassing and serious. Nor will it be wholly an unknown entity : because the intelligible notions through which we interpret physical nature cannot but have a connection with the latter.¹

In a certain sense, any reality whatever *in its external aspect* is an unreachable "thing in itself." 'Remaking' can only be internal knowledge. It may be said that to know intimately, by identification, that is, by remaking it, an act of thought, an act of will, *in its external aspect*, is excluded by definition. But this is a secondary problem.²

119

To affirm that there is something absolutely unknowable is a piece of presumption. But neither

¹ Cf. notes 77 and 122, § 6.

² Cf. note 115.

can we exclude the possibility of there being something absolutely unknowable.

120

It was a common belief that, in order to celebrate the conquests of science and strengthen our efforts and responsibility as terrestrial beings, the original reality of thought had to be denied. It was feared that this reality would be misunderstood as something supernatural and fabulous. And in fact this danger exists ; but, on the other hand, the study of the activity of thought alone is capable of removing it with certainty. In any case—it need hardly be said—the very purpose of science requires its foundation to be laid in what is *true*.

121

There is a characteristic that belongs specially to philosophic thought as we find it developed in Italy, and not only among the followers of absolute idealism. I mean the tendency to consider as knowledge, *par excellence*, the taking consciousness of mental activity itself (the intimate knowing, which is a *making*).

Intimate knowledge is indeed everywhere championed by the name of “intuition” ; but thereby a subordinate position, or at least a limited field, is implicitly attributed to it. However much “intuition” may be dignified, it will never be put in its proper place until—when we better understand its nature, and that of every knowing—we call it *knowledge*.

This tendency coincides with a larger consideration of poetic and artistic thought from the philosophic point of view ; it is also a fruitful path of study and serves to cover lacunae and correct errors. But it leads to a false point of view when, just in order to concentrate attention on the study of thought's activity in its own value and reality (instead of viewing it as an instrument for knowing the datum), on the other hand, attempt is made to deny absolutely the cognitive value of the exact sciences, and likewise a tendency is shown to depreciate their spiritual value in general. This attitude as concerns these consequences could not in the past, or at any rate cannot now, be other than transitory.

122

The Physical Sciences and their Spiritual Value

1.—There is a direct ethical value in scientific activity, in so far as a thought of *responsibility*, which includes the remotest future, is directly realised in it. The ethical universal is here an identification with the real beyond every given limit, a responsibility, a solidarity.

One may be, or think that one is, indifferent to the idea of the destruction of everything to which man has devoted his work and applied himself with confidence ; indifferent to the idea of a cataclysm, of a pestilence, of a return to barbarism, such as, for instance, may take place in a thousand years, or in an incalculable period of time. But this only shows a more limited human nature, the want of a value of responsibility, of objectivity, of 'impersonality.'

Charity is not *ex principio* indifferent to anything that may take place, however far removed in time or space ; and the same must be said about reason.

Perhaps elsewhere in the universe life seeks other ways with more fortunate results. We cannot, however, absolutely exclude the possibility that only here it may have reached such rich and conscious forms, such specifications and clear integrations, and have succeeded in wresting such vivid lights and emotions from that element which is exteriority and inertness. And if without false scepticism we contemplate this miracle of life, if we consider that perhaps in us, at this moment, its destiny is decided both on earth and in the universe, such a thought cannot be indifferent to us except through a certain *irresponsibility*. And the desire that past experience with all its wealth may not be destroyed, for instance, by a slight convulsion, that all this toil of ours may not end in itself—this responsibility which includes, not years, but generations and centuries and the most distant future, is not puerile, and unreasonable, nor is it only an arid utilitarianism ; it is the principle of reason itself. For it is a consciousness of the universal, an unlimited *essential* identification. And it is the principle of life, which is a concentration in the moment—and this, the vastest possible.

Undoubtedly things must have a value in themselves ; and it is wrong to suppose that things acquire a value through the mere fact of their duration, and that if they have no durability they are valueless. But the demand for the eternal is not fulfilled only in an actual value ; it is also fulfilled by serving something else and through the things which have

duration (the things, not eternal in a specific sense, but 'perpetual,' 'immortal,' or simply 'lasting'). Moreover, that 'serving something else' is also, under a certain aspect, an actual value, and satisfies in the last resort one and the same exigency of eternity, and coalesces with the eternal value which is immanent in feeling and consciousness. Thus the strongest love for the beloved being, for which the whole world of things, of good, of evil, finds its justification in and through the moment, at that very moment desires itself as a thing to be perpetuated, as an indissoluble bond—attributes which imply time, the thing that has duration in time. The beautiful excites, does not only fulfil, the tormenting demand for the eternal.

And also the wonder of light ought to awaken every one to a thought of mingled joy and anxiety, which unites infinite generations. Inasmuch as we have reached this summit, inasmuch as we have attained to see the light, according as we are enabled to see it, in matter and in the luxuriance of forms, how it is possible to disregard this proof, this prodigy, this superb achievement of mind? How can we remain unmoved by the intensity of its struggle and of its *immortal* travail?

2.—The applications of science are forms of life in a direct sense, inasmuch as they are a *material of realisation* of activity. As means for the attainment of ends, they cannot perhaps justify their cost, nor the zeal or interest that we feel in them: but as *material of realisation* they have an immediate spiritual value.¹ Every life is an effort to concentrate into one experience the largest possible amount

¹ See *Intelligence in Expression*, Essay *ad fin.*, § 13.

of reality ; and to entrust the same to the ever-renewing principle of this and of every experience.¹ In connection with this profound vocation of mind, the applications of science are not only ' conditions,' but ' material causes ' of great importance. What shall we say, for instance, of the press, of books, where men gather up so many experiences in so short a space ? Their function and nature must be likened to those of the memory (understood in its conditions). Thus it comes about that the applications of science offer new conditions to this identification of the past and the future in the intrinsic of activity, that is, in the identical originality of the values and forms of activity — an identification which is a principle-value constitutive of spiritual activity.

3.—I have no wish to dwell upon the question dealing with the indirect effects of the sciences in solving social problems, in offering new conditions allowing human nature to actuate and develop itself, allowing man to realise his nature, and life to find new forms, and in what sense ; and also, as regards natural selection, in constituting a more powerful instrument in the hands of those peoples that possess in varying degrees qualities of intelligence, of good faith, of *responsibility*.

4.—There is an *heroic*, or tragic, element in the history of science, by reason of the strenuous, arduous attempts to grasp physical nature, to transform and render more subtle the notions wherewith to interpret reality, to fashion new material instruments and new instruments of thought, new notions, not only useful,

¹ *Op. cit.*, § 59 ; cf. in this vol. note 33.

but true, in order to penetrate the secret or secrets of nature.

5.—The value of a scientific discovery is not measured by the value of any particular application of it, whether theoretical or practical,¹ because it contains, expresses the infinite possibilities disclosed, an intensive infinite, the eternal of activity, that is to say, an intrinsic character of forms and values, which are *necessary*, yet endlessly different and free.

6.—*The cognitive value of the physical sciences.* There are those who regard as *knowledge* only constructive knowledge, that which in a certain sense aims at transcending thought, that which is concerned with the datum; the knowledge which implies a departing from actual thought, a positing or regarding as real that which is not actually thought or felt, that which we consider should necessarily be supposed, admitted, postulated.²

There are others who do not assign any cognitive value to this interpretative process, and they describe as knowledge only that which is a making, a remaking of the object: a self-identifying with the act, with the moment of the theoretical and practical activity, which is to be known and is known. According to this view the physical sciences have no cognitive value.

Both these conceptions are one-sided, and have something forced and fictitious about them. For

¹ See *op. cit.*, *Essay ad fin.*, § 13; cf. H. Bergson, *L'Évolution créatrice*, p. 199 (8th ed.).

² George Santayana (*Scepticism and Animal Faith*: London, 1923) applies the name of knowledge only to this: though, on the other hand, he denies that it has any value, except extrinsically, through an act of faith.

they do not consider the *value* of knowing (which alone can guide us to define its essential character or characteristics); they do not consider it with unhampered judgment, but as one who does not think himself safe except in rigorous distinctions, which yet are rather 'constructed' than 'thought'; scholastic, unreal distinctions which are in fact not conceived in their *raison d'être*.

Undoubtedly, if it be true that to understand means a *making* (without residuum), then the physical reality is not understood and known, nor can it ever be known (intimately), because it is—or on the hypothesis that it is—of a nature different from thought. Only it is to be noted that even historical knowledge is not a *making* without residuum. And if I say: "I was born in a certain year," I affirm thereby many things which I have not really experienced and thought, but only deduced and supposed, however necessarily; and thus I am always obliged to overpass the limits of my conscious present—a thing which the standpoint of a purely intimate knowledge would not admit.

The truth is that *knowing* is a value: and we ought to search out without prejudice what this value really is in our consciousness or thought. It is then that we find that universality or intrinsic necessity is essential to it; that *making* is also essential to it; but that it is never free from implications which are not a making; that to form an estimate of this value, we must go back in the last resort to an immediate judgment, which imposes itself, and outside of which there is no higher tribunal (unless it be that same judgment over again). And this judgment imposes

itself through an intrinsic value, in face of which, in any particular case, to consider it as arbitrary (particular, exclusive, ephemeral) would appear a most arbitrary proceeding. And this which is the ultimate criterion, this value of truth, or of knowing, lies in a *transparency*, or *light*, that is (for names may vary *ad libitum*) in a *spiritual concentration*, in an *identity of the real*, in an *essential identity in the values and forms of thought* in so far as they are in themselves necessary and infinitely original. In this self-realisation of something as original, self-necessary, and therefore *universal*, in this *identification*, in this *transparency beyond every given limit* (and not as some still authoritatively affirm, in a principle of economy !) is found the value of the true and of knowing, is found its reason, its *cause* : and this reason, this cause occurs, though always in varying intensity and purity, both in poetic thought and in a knowledge gained through abstractly objective notions. The embracing of infinite experiences in a single instant, this is a *glory* which belongs as well to scientific research as to philosophic, historical, and artistic thought.

“ But what is this knowledge, this truth of the physical sciences,” some will object, “ if it have no ontological value, if it reach not the original foundation, the constitutive principle of phaenomena ? We recognise that these sciences also are marked by a making or remaking in accordance with intrinsic necessities of thought. Numerical relations are *made* by ourselves ; mathematics are perfectly *lucid* ; and cannot wholly change their nature owing to the fact of their being applied. Indeed in applied science

thought is enriched and integrated in its values and forms, while immense regions of reality are concentrated in its light. On the other hand we recognise that historic thought is full of elements, of facts and moments that are not really known, and which are not realities of an actual thought, as for instance the coexistence of an individual or of a thought, other than that with which we identify ourselves. But this in historic thought is a secondary matter. What is asked for is that something be really known ; and the *supposed* element does not in fact exclude the knowing, if the former be not that which is essentially and chiefly sought after. If the sciences dealing with matter tell us nothing about its inner reality, they may be radiant with this *glory* of thought, as an origin which is infinite and necessary in itself ; they may offer us clear and vast conceptions which do not contradict each other, but they cannot satisfy an exigency of intimacy and absoluteness which essentially belongs to knowing and to the demand for truth."

But here we detect the error ! Scientific thought cannot change nature and value, cannot lose its intimate demand for absoluteness, merely because of the fact that the problem of its ontological value has been solved—if solved it has been—in a negative sense : and this must be recognised in a special manner by those who search for the reality and value of thought in its very actuality and not with reference to something else. In order that the significance of scientific thought (and also of common thought, inasmuch as it represents a less advanced phase of the former) may be thus limited, this exclusion of

all ontological value ought to pervade the sciences, the conviction that their significance is only practical ought to permeate this pseudo-theoretical activity. So limited, and reduced, scientific thought would in fact have a nature other than what it has. Yet the ontological implication, though condemned, is always reasserting itself in scientific investigation, and is inseparable from it.

I maintain that it is impossible to affirm that scientific thought is destitute of cognitive value, on the ground that matter possibly or probably differs in nature from the activity of thought, and that therefore it cannot be known; nor can this impossibility be upheld only by insisting that all claim on the part of scientific activity to discover the constitutive principle of phaenomena is unfounded. The *cognitive* value must not be judged from the *result*, but from the *spirit* of a given activity of thought. Only when the relativistic and sceptical spirit has profoundly changed the character of scientific activity, and extinguished every demand for absoluteness, only then will it be possible to deny all cognitive value to scientific thought, instead of making it a question of degree.

On the other hand, the solution in a negative sense of the ontological problem (as touching the physical sciences) is, to say the least, doubtful, and anything but demonstrated.

The sciences interpret the physical reality through "intelligible notions"—numerical relations, quantitative relations in general, relation of (external) cause as a co-ordinating principle of phaenomena, conditionality, coexistence, succession, existence;

and these notions undoubtedly still belong to our own substance ; they are not intimately and absolutely constitutive of things. Nevertheless we must bear in mind that these intelligible notions, while they form themselves originally, are yet constantly subject to the shock and control of objective experience, the latter being that ' second ' cause which not without some foundation sometimes eclipses the ' first.' Nor should we forget that, while the category or necessity of existence is certainly a necessity of thought, yet, as such, it is not wholly explained as regards its value, its character, its urgency and cogency in a given place and at a given time.

Nothing is more improbable or ludicrous than to pretend that these forms or notions, which are at once subjective and necessary, universal, universally valid in interpreting the physical reality, have yet no connection with the latter—admitting that this physical reality exists, and is not resolved into our positing of it, into a mere (abstract) ideality.

And if there be a point of connection with the physical reality such as it is absolutely, how can we affirm that the "intelligible notions" have no cognitive value ? If there be an element whose coming into existence *hic et nunc* is not wholly explained from the standpoint of thought's internal exigencies ; if this element is found in experience, in so far as the latter does not vary *only* as those exigencies ; if we succeed in approaching this element ever more closely and lay hold of it, if we decompose and recompose it in its mechanism, in its

functions, in its internal and external relations—though we do not realise or remake it absolutely in the values and forms of our activity—on what grounds are we to disallow all value of absoluteness to this constructive knowing? If there be a contact with the reality, and if in the reality things are inter-related, we cannot deny the possibility of an object being really *known* (though not completely), merely because an ‘existent’ in it is incapable of being identified with thought.

To recapitulate : the transparency of *doing* is found (though varying in degree) in every field of activity. On the other hand, that which is absoluteness, or a claim of reaching the absolute, a confidence of having a foundation on something real, or of seeking something real, truly, absolutely real, this does not belong exclusively to historic knowledge. Only it must be admitted that in the exact sciences, generally speaking, *consciousness* and *certainity* do not wholly coincide ; the latter is not altogether proportionally related to the former.

The following is a statement that may seem too simple ; yet it is true. The cognitive, or merely practical, character of a science, indeed of a page of science, depends on the spirit in which it is dealt with, and on the attitude and vocation of each person.¹

¹ See note 117.

123

Analysis of the Expressive Material

“E veggìola passar sì dolce e rìa

Che l'alma trema per levarsi a volo.”¹

PETRARCA, “Pien d'un vago pensier . . .”

Che l'alma trema per levarsi a volo. The most authoritative commentators interpret this line as follows: *per*=at the point, and *levarsi a volo*=to die; hence they understand the words to mean: “that my soul trembles while dying.”² Thus, through desire of precision (which is really abstraction and one-sidedness) we lose that most vivid and truly concrete moment of life, which is mind in its integrity. For in that *levarsi a volo* there are, in a certain sense, all the values and forms of mental activity. There is the dying, but there is also the being born in the object, which is the beloved being—the stairs that lead to God, as Petrarca says; a finding again the eternal in the novelty of birth; the infirmity of the body, which is stirred to the utmost of its power, and almost forced beyond the laws of its nature; the soul that “trembles,” that is summoned to come forth from its wonted uses, that is lifted out of its narrowness, out of the circle of its more particular, exclusive nature, out of its habits and favourite pleasures. And there are the categories of space and time.—It is wonderful how in a moment of life every value of activity realises itself: or at least one has

¹ “And I see her passing so sweet and disdainful, that my soul trembles to rise on the wing.”

² *Le Rime di Francesco Petrarca*, commentate da G. Carducci e S. Ferrari. Nuova tiratura. Sansoni, Firenze, 1920.

the impression that it only fails to realise itself in so far as the subject-matter, the occasion, the material for its realisation is wanting, it being there *in principio*, so that if it were realised it would not be contradictory or unintelligible in connection with that moment. And contrariwise, if it be the mind that is wanting, in the fulness of its values and forms, we become aware of this deficiency, and it touches and offends our feeling and intellect in quite another way.

If we analyse the material of the sounds in the above verse, we find a special use of the letters *a* and *o*, the letter *a* being used with remarkable frequency, and both letters *o* and *a* being through their position specially prominent and effective: “che l'alma trema per levarsi *a* volo.”

In Italian the letter *a* displays a certain attitude for expressing, for being called to express, images of space, and in space liberty and joy. This is true also for the letter *o*, but in a less striking manner, and, of course, with a certain difference. Thus for instance :

“ Nel reame ove li angeli hanno pace.”¹

DANTE, *Vita Nuova*, Canzone III.

“ Stormi d'augelli varcano la foce,
poi tutte l'ali bagnano nel mare.”²

D'ANNUNZIO, *Laudi*, III., La Tenzzone.

The theory that letters have a significance, a colour—an element from which may be derived the meaning of more complex unities—this theory, as usually understood, corresponds rather to a material (mech-

¹ “ In the realm where the angels have peace.”

² “ Flocks of birds overpass the river-mouth, then bathe their wide-spread wings in the sea.”

anical, determinist) conception, which deduces all that has a value from *second causes*, considering and seeing nought but these. This, however, is not what I mean. In fact, because thought is activity which makes a *universal* of every particular, therefore it comes about that every particular (which may also have an origin relatively accidental) repeats, in varying manner and intensity, the character of the whole, and plays its part in the formation thereof. Thought, when it realises itself in a new form, intends to take up every particular in and through its quality, by that very act. Thus it is that more or less, in accordance with the varying genius of the language, a given word is not formed or renewed, except in so far as it reproduces the character of other words, and of the whole vocabulary. Thought forms itself in every particular, *identifying* in that particular the whole, now more now less. On the other hand, every particular, in its generic meaning (which is furnished by tradition, by use, by custom, by spiritual and historical reasons, and by physical and physiological conditions) forms *that* particular. Undoubtedly a strong thought may transform and profoundly change the meaning and aspect of a colour or sound ; but not extrinsically, nor by neglecting the meaning and the aspect which thought of thousands of years has impressed on it.

All this of course does not happen *deliberately*, nor yet, on the other hand, *unconsciously*, but through an originality (of values and forms) which is diffused and operative wherever there is matter and activity.

It is true that a name sounds well or ill according as it is more or less well borne, and that in itself the

material of sounds, or of colours, does but weakly impose itself in its usual meaning or quality. But this does not interfere with the proper function of artistic thought, which is, not to neglect, but to raise to a high value these conditions in which it is formed.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that since such is the material of sounds 'in its poverty,' therefore, by manipulating the words, by knowing the generic value of sounds, and admitting that rigorous rules could be drawn up in this connection, we should yet get no further : and this because the value lies solely in thought which renews itself *originally*, and because *the value must come from the eternal of activity*, and it would be useless to look for it by starting from the material, that is, by making use of material elements in their poorest meaning, and hoping to extract therefrom a high thought, a high value, through arranging them in a different way.

In like manner, owing to a mistaken valuation of the material of expression, the material of language is sometimes wrongly blamed, that is, a given language in itself, such as we find it in daily use, is held responsible, and we attribute to it defects—and excellences—which in fact it does not possess. Every language supplies delicate and innumerable means of producing all kinds of different effects : if the material, the conditions, the means appear to be wanting, this for the most part happens because the true poetic power fails.

In the first of the passages above quoted, with

regard to the word “ *trema* ” it should be noticed how the letter *e* is raised to a high value, by renewing itself and gathering strength in that which seems to be a general value or quality of this letter ; which, in Italian, is suited to the essential words that, in the infinite of their possibility, in their rich and potent indetermination, may be developed and determined in every variety of actuation, but which still lend themselves to the expression of an introspective view and to the consideration of activity as operating from within, rather than to the presentment of the object, that is, of things in their strong spatial individuation. They tend to indicate essences rather than forms, the plural rather than the singular, which is more individuated, determined, sculptured.

“ Quel rosignuol, che sì soave piagne
 Forse suoi figli, o sua cara consorte,
Di dolcezza empie il cielo e le campagne
 Con tante note sì pietose e scorte.”¹

PETRARCA.

The first accent, which falls on the *e* of *dolcezza*, leads us still to the indetermination of the song, to that intensive infinite and to that secret which excludes nothing. But the song widens out and forms itself while renewing and creating all things, the shadows and the calm lights of mountain and sky : and to the expression are adapted the vowels, which, so to say, are the friends of space and of matter and sculptured forms, such as the *a* and also the *o*, at least in Italian.

¹ “ That nightingale, which so softly laments perhaps his little ones, or his dear consort, with sweetness fills the sky and the fields with many a note so pitiful and wary.”

Here we may observe in passing that every language possesses different 'means.' But we ought not on this account to attach too great weight to the difficulty of understanding, for instance, a foreign language in its salient and rarer expressions. For it is precisely a power which belongs to the essential nature of thought, that of concentrating always and everywhere the character of the language, all the more in proportion as thought is lively and strong and truly original. Hence it is that in the case of a reader of a different age and country, provided the latter be not far from him in spirit, a great poet will rapidly impress, render intelligible and convincing at once his own thought and every value and meaning imprinted on his material.

Again, in the same verse, if we continue the analysis of the glowing element of expression, we find that the *o* of *cielo* is slightly prolonged because an *e* follows, and similarly the accented *a* of *campagne*, and each *a* of this word is more prominent by reason of the *e* which follows (and perhaps because of the two preceding *e*'s). Both the *e*'s after the *o* of *cielo* and the *a* of *campagne* are like a shadow coming after these vowels, through which the latter gain prominence, or like an echo that calls anew to the infinite of song. And here we may reflect again that the qualities of words are in themselves weak, and may assume the most varied meanings; but when there is a living intensity of sounds, the material being pervaded with activity, then these qualities acquire value: and they are not lifted into value extrinsically, but they themselves (having already a meaning) gain value, arouse, recall each other, find

their kinships, tend to realise themselves in a wider synthesis, to be a note or key through which the whole is perceived (—and this happens because of the *universal* of every content of consciousness).

This is especially seen in alliteration, and in assonance. These figures of speech may be at times something mechanical; the physiological element may play its part in them in a greater or less degree. But the mechanical explanation (where they are referred to blind reasons, such as habit or inertia) is inadequate. Alliteration and assonance, and rime, and on the other hand the changes of sounds, and the uniformity (the self-uniformising) of the changes (which is the object of glottology), are particular forms of a phaenomenon and of a principle much more vast and varied, and this is the reality of a sound as an *active* principle.

In conclusion I wish to point out that if the reader should meet with correspondences of sounds and meanings quite different from those described, these would not properly be exceptions,—and they might also be more numerous than the instances. It is not my purpose to set forth rules, but *reasons*, whose essence lies in a non-predetermined power of being, which is however neither chance nor *arbitrium*.

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